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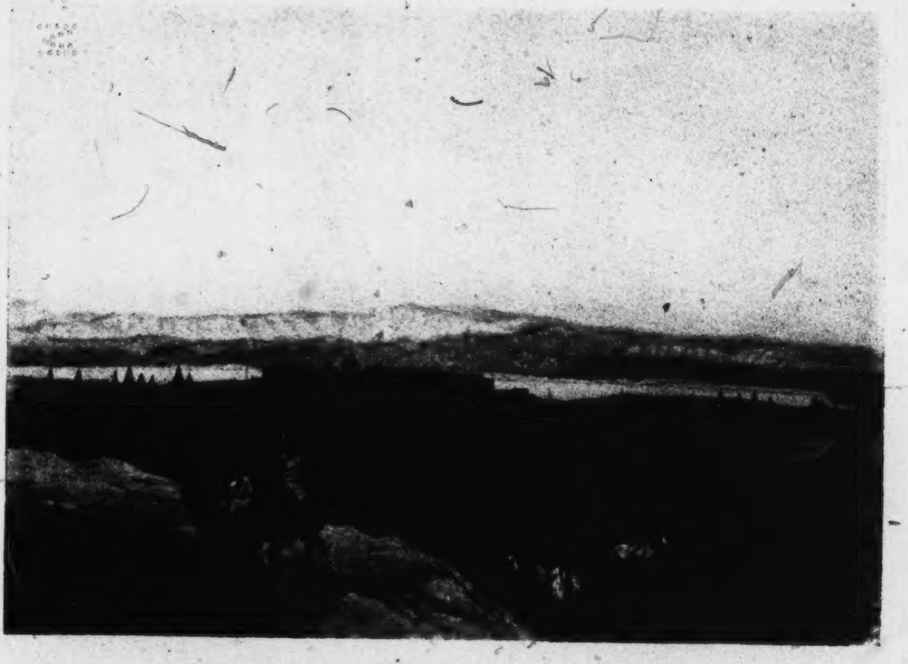
HISTORY
OF
THE AMERICAN FUR TRADE
OF THE
FAR WEST



FORT UNION

(*Maximilian—1833*)

THE
American Fur Trade
OF THE
Far West

A History of the Pioneer Trading Posts and Early
Fur Companies of the Missouri Valley and
the Rocky Mountains and of
the Overland Commerce
with Santa Fe.

MAP AND ILLUSTRATIONS

BY
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Captain Corps of Engineers, U. S. A., Author of
"The Yellowstone."

THREE VOLUMES

VOLUME I.

NEW YORK
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1902

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IN HONOR OF
THE
Forgotten Heroes
OF
Early Fur Trade Days
WHO
FIRST EXPLORED THE UNKNOWN REGIONS
BEYOND THE MISSISSIPPI
BEARING THE STANDARD OF PEACEFUL COMMERCE
TO THE
REMOTEST VALLEYS OF THE ROCKY MOUNTAINS
AND THE
FAR-OFF COASTS OF THE PACIFIC OCEAN

Reclass. Jan 10-30. E.R.

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PREFACE.

A late historical writer has said that there are few more impressive incidents in the history of the West than the meeting by Lewis and Clark, when nearly home from their journey across the continent, of numerous parties of traders wending their way to the heart of the wilderness which these explorers had just left. There could be no doubt in this manifestation of a common purpose which way the course of empire was tending. Scarcely had the United States come into possession of Louisiana, and before she had fairly taken stock of her new acquisition, her citizens had begun to penetrate its remote interior, impatient to learn what it had in store for them.

Thirty-seven years passed away and this movement presented another phase of even deeper significance. A little incident serves to determine its date. In the year 1843 James Bridger, whose name will always be prominent in annals of Western adventure, built a post on a tributary of Green river, a water of the Pacific Ocean, for the convenience of emigrants. It was the first trading post beyond the Mississippi ever built for this purpose, and its establishment marks the beginning of the era of emigration into the Far West.

These two landmarks — the return of Lewis and Clark and the founding of Fort Bridger — determine the limits of a distinct period in Western history. It is a period of which comparatively little is known because it has been obscured by the more brilliant events of that immediately following. The Mormon emigration, the War with Mexico, the discovery of gold in California, and the controversy over the Oregon Question, absorbed public attention in their time, so far as the West was concerned, and in a large measure have done so since.

For forty years after the purchase of Louisiana the people of the United States were at a loss to know what to do with their new possession. It was not yet needed for settlement, for the eastern shore of the Mississippi was still an unsubdued wilderness in which the stream of emigration might lose itself for many years to come. No one seems to have suspected that its distant mountains abounded in the precious metals. The single attraction that it offered in a commercial way was its wealth of furs, the gathering of which became, and for a long time remained, the only business of importance in this entire region.

The nature of this business determined the character of the early white population. It was the roving trader and the solitary trapper who first sought out these inhospitable wilds, traced the streams to their sources, scaled the mountain passes, and explored a boundless expanse of territory where the foot of the white man had never trodden before. The Far West became a field of romantic adventure, and developed a class of men who loved the wandering career of the native inhabitant rather than the toilsome lot of the industrious colonist. The type of life thus developed, though essentially evanescent, and not representing any profound national movement, was a distinct and necessary phase in the growth of this new country. Abounding in incidents picturesque and heroic, its annals inspire an interest akin to that which belongs to the age of knight-errantry. For the free hunter of the Far West was, in his rough way, a good deal of a knight-errant. Caparisoned in the wild attire of the Indian, and armed *cap-a-pie* for instant combat, he roamed far and wide over deserts and mountains, gathering the scattered wealth of those regions, slaying ferocious beasts and savage men, and leading a life in which every footstep was beset with enemies and every moment pregnant of peril. The great proportion of these intrepid spirits who laid down their lives in that far country is impressive proof of the jeopardy of their existence. All in all, the period of this adventurous business may justly be considered the romantic era of the history of the West.

But if the fur trade was lacking in events of deep national significance — the Astorian enterprise always excepted — it was not without its influence upon the course of empire in the West. It was the trader and trapper who first explored and established the routes of travel which are now, and always will be, the avenues of commerce in that region. *They* were the "pathfinders" of the West, and not those later official explorers whom posterity so recognizes. No feature of western geography was ever *discovered* by government explorers after 1840. Everything was already known, and had been for fully a decade. It is true that many features, like the Yellowstone wonderland, with which these restless rovers were familiar, were afterward forgotten and were re-discovered in later years; but there has never been a time until very recently when the geography of the West was so thoroughly understood as it was by the trader and trapper from 1830 to 1840.

This minute knowledge was of practical use in many ways. When Brigham Young selected the valley of Great Salt Lake as the future home of his people, he did so largely upon information derived from the traders. When the War with Mexico came, the military forces of the United States invaded New Mexico under the guidance of men who knew every trail and mountain pass better than the most thorough reconnaissance could have taught them. When the national troops appeared before the gates of Santa Fe they were met by a people who had already been virtually won to the American cause through long intercourse with the traders. When the rush of emigration to California and Oregon followed, the emigrants found a highway across the continent already established. When the government entered in earnest upon the work of exploration, it was the veteran mountaineer who was always sought to do service as guide.

Profound and far-reaching was the influence of the fur trade upon the destiny of the Indian. If the traders brought with them corrupting vices and desolating disease, they also brought to the Indian his first lessons in the life that he was yet to lead. They mingled with his people, learned his language and customs, understood his character, and, when not impelled by business rivalry, treated him as a man and as a brother. The extensive intermarriage of the two races during a period of more than a century under the fur trade régime has probably done more than any other one thing toward the ultimate civilization of an almost untamable race. It was only in these early years that the white man and the Indian truly understood each other. Very rarely has any Indian agent or army officer, however wide their experience, displayed that intimate acquaintance with the tribes and knowledge of the native character, that was possessed by the trader and trapper. Fortunate would it have been if this practical experience had been turned to proper account and if these trained men had oftener been employed by the government in transacting its business with the Indians.

The cause of science has repeatedly acknowledged its indebtedness to the fur trade. Maximilian, Nuttall, Audubon, Nicollet, Catlin, and many others enjoyed facilities for work in that wild country which would have been impossible without the assistance of the trader. This was particularly true of those researches which related to the early life, customs, and tribal history of the Indians; to the fauna and flora of the country; and to the geography of a region which was *terra incognita* when the trader entered it.

Finally the nation owes a debt of gratitude to those resolute pioneers, who, single-handed and alone, stood their ground against their British rivals between the Great Lakes and the Rocky mountains. Their valiant bearing prevented in a large degree those international complications which so often threatened the peace of the two countries along other portions of the frontier.

The fur trade, therefore, had a real and potent influence upon the history of the West — an influence imperfectly understood as yet, but which will be more fully recognized as time goes on. It is the purpose of this work to promote an appreciation of its importance by presenting a history of THE AMERICAN FUR TRADE OF THE FAR WEST during the period of its principal operations in that extensive region. The subject has never yet been dealt with in a comprehensive way, and many of its important transactions are as little known as if they had not taken place. Writers of Western history have, to a great extent, neglected these earlier events, giving their attention first to that which occurred last, and have thus left a goodly portion of the field worked over scarcely at all. Excepting a few important works dealing with special features, the history of the American fur trade has never heretofore received any particular attention.

In fixing upon a logical order of presenting the subject much embarrassment has been experienced on account of the heterogeneous character of the material to be dealt with. The events have been so diverse, and have borne so little relation to each other, that the task of making a connected narrative has been well-nigh impossible. Irving, in his masterly treatment of certain enterprises of the American fur trade, has handled this difficulty in a way that leaves little to be desired. Along with the run of his story he constantly introduces, without violence or apparent effort, descriptions of scenery, fauna and flora, men and manners, anecdotes of personal adventure, sketches of prominent characters, comments and criticisms — and all in such harmonious fashion that the lack of connection between the various parts would scarcely be noticed by the general reader. But in a work which attempts to give a comprehensive view of the entire field, this method did not seem admissible. It was considered essential to segregate cognate subjects as far as possible under separate heads so as to present at a single view each phase of the general theme. The result has been a five-fold division of the work with smaller classifications under each.

Part I. treats of the business of the fur trade in its several bearings and describes its characteristic features. The business was a peculiar one in many respects, and an understanding of its peculiarities is essential to an understanding of its history.

Part II. is the narrative proper of the events of the fur trade and follows their order chronologically as far as is possible and preserve the continuity of distinct subjects. It comprises the bulk of the work and the principal results of its researches.

Part III. is an account of those events which did not pertain directly to the fur trade, but which transpired in the country and at the time in which the fur trade was being carried on. Indirectly they were all connected with that business.

Part IV. contains descriptions of a few of the more noteworthy events and characters of the fur trade which stand out by themselves as interesting incidents apart from their particular bearing upon the course of the narrative.

Part V. undertakes to give a general view of the country in which the trans-Mississippi fur trade flourished, together with some notice of its fauna and flora and of its native inhabitants. Its purpose is solely to present a picture of the country as it appeared to the practical eye of the trader, and not at all to discuss it in exhaustive detail or from a technical standpoint. In strictly logical order this portion of the subject was entitled to precedence in the arrangement of parts, but as it was in reality of secondary importance to the main purpose, it was placed last. It is hoped that this subordination of position may not divert from it the attention it deserves as an explanatory adjunct to the entire work. Particularly in the matter of geographical nomenclature and discovery it contains the results of much historical research.

Some of the rarer and more important original documents which have been used in preparing this work are presented in the Appendix. To the critical student, and even to the general reader, there will be much of genuine interest in these living pictures of a forgotten past.

For the more complete elucidation of the subject a map of the trans-Mississippi country has been prepared showing it as it was in 1843. The preparation of this map has been a greater labor than its lines and letters, skilfully as these are made, might lead one to suppose, and upon many points it will give a better idea than can be had from unaided written description. The drawing was executed by Mr. Paul Burgoldt of St. Louis, Mo., one of the ablest artists in this kind of work that the country affords.

In assembling the data for this work more than ordinary difficulties have been encountered. No general authorities were available. Except in two instances the transactions of the Western fur trade did not fall within the purview of the public press, and the scattering references in eastern periodicals are seldom of much value. The era of government exploration not having yet set in there are very few official reports that deal directly with the subject. A large amount of information is scattered through the many narratives of adventure which appeared at this time, but these works, unfortunately for the present purpose, were mostly written to make good stories, and abound in exaggerations at the expense of accurate data. They are a perilous resource to the historian. Finally what may be called original data, consisting of unpublished documents of every description and oral testimony by those who have some personal knowledge of these early events, are scattered as widely as are the posterity of those who helped make the history of the fur trade.

The use of the data brought together from these scattered and dissimilar sources has been scarcely less embarrassing than the process of their collection. It has been necessary to cull from a multitude of authorities — here a little and there a little — checking one against another until a correct result could be arrived at. Despite the great pains taken in this sifting process, no one is more conscious than the author that only a moderate degree of success has been attained. The wholly unexpected places in which material of the highest value has been found, forcibly suggest that a great deal more may have been overlooked. In truth, there is scattered throughout the country, in every variety of hiding-place, documents of true historic value which might become public knowledge did their owners but realize their worth. Evidence has constantly presented itself of the existence of valuable journals kept by those who were once prominent in the far-west country, but where they are now it is impossible to say. Every little while an interesting letter or other document falls under the eye of some one who understands its worth and is brought to public knowledge. This process will doubtless continue for many years to come. But if it must be admitted that much has escaped discovery in these researches, it is believed that the essential facts relating to all the events herein described have been determined.

Of the many published works consulted, those of Washington Irving and Josiah Gregg are the most important, for they handle in a thoroughly comprehensive and accurate way the special subjects of which they treat. *Astoria, Captain Bonneville,* and the *Commerce of the Prairies* will never be surpassed in their particular fields.

Maximilian Prince of Wied is the most reliable published authority upon the early history of the American Fur Company on the upper Missouri. The extensive library of Americana belonging to the Hon. Peter Koch of Bozeman, Montana, himself a discriminating student of early Western history, possesses the very unusual treasure of a copy of Maximilian's book. The loan of this work during several months made it possible to draw from the distinguished author much information, which, in an ordinary perusal, would have been overlooked.

Captains Lewis and Clark, the first official explorers of the Missouri and Columbia valleys; Lieutenant Pike, the pioneer explorer of the southwest; David Thompson and Alexander Henry the younger, who crossed the continent in 1813 in the service of the Northwest Fur Company; Charles Larpenteur, *"Forty years a Fur Trader on the upper Missouri,"* and Francisco Garces, a Spanish pioneer of the Colorado valley, left journals which have recently had the good fortune to be published, either in original or new editions, under the editorship of the late Dr. Elliott Coues, who gave to this work the ten years of his life immediately preceding his untimely death. The intrinsic value of these journals in themselves is scarcely greater than that of the copious editorial commentary which accompanies them. Both have been freely used in this work, while equally important has been the direct assistance received from Dr. Coues in the course of a long and interesting correspondence.

Mrs. Frances Fuller Victor, the historian of Oregon and Washington, has woven around the biography of the trapper Joseph Meek a very complete account of the desultory operations of the mountain traders between 1830 and 1840. Her contributions to Bancroft's history of the Western states likewise contain a great deal relating to the fur trade. The extensive fund of information collected through a lifetime devoted to these studies has been freely tendered through the medium of correspondence for use in the present work.

Father P. J. De Smet, the distinguished Jesuit missionary, holds an eminent place as an authority upon the pioneer history of the Rocky mountain region. The correspondence relating to his travels was extensive and most of it has been published. It is a rich treasure house of facts relating to those early times.

The writings of travelers who visited these remote regions and published narratives of their experiences, or left journals which have since been edited by other hands, are the next most important reliance. Bradbury and Brackenridge are the standard authorities upon the first part of the overland Astorian expedition and upon contemporary events along the Missouri river. Franchère, Cox, Ross, and Henry all wrote of the transactions of the Pacific Fur Company during its short career upon the Columbia. Zenas Leonard, W. A. Ferris, Thomas Nuttall, J. K. Townsend, Thomas J. Farnham, F. A. Wislizenus, Audubon the naturalist, Nathaniel J. Wyeth, John B. Wyeth, Jacob Fowler, and the Reverend Samuel Parker are among those writers who have done most to preserve the history of this early period.

There are other publications which deal with the same subjects but in a less careful way, being narratives of personal adventure in which a thrilling recital was the principal object in view. Among the better works of this class may be mentioned *Scenes in the Rocky Mountains* by Rufus Sage, and *Scenes and Adventures in the United States Army* by P. St. G. Cooke. The romance by Frederick Ruxton, *Life in the Far West,* is a useful work, as is also the extravagant autobiography of James P. Beckwourth. Coyner's *Lost Trappers* is an example of a vicious method of writing occasionally indulged in by these early authors who manufactured their narratives out of whole cloth and advertised them to the public as truthful history.

There is much relating to the fur trade scattered through government publications, though not as a general thing easily accessible. A few official reports have fortunately been rescued from "public document" oblivion through the labors of private editors. *Lewis and Clark, Pike* and *Long* can now be found in any good library, but it is only in the more elaborate collections that the reports of Nicollet and others of equal value may be seen. The earlier government publications, such as the *American State Papers,* are to be found in only the very best libraries. They are rich in material pertaining to early military and Indian problems; but like the hidden ore of the mountains it is to be had only by patient and laborious mining. Seldom indeed has the government scattered its wealth of information in surface deposits where it can be had by mere superficial digging.

The historical societies of Wisconsin, Missouri, Kansas, Nebraska, Iowa, Minnesota, and Montana have published much relating to the history of the fur trade; and have collected many documents bearing upon its various features. In most instances this material has been gratuitously tendered for use in connection with these researches.

Such are the principal sources of information herein relied upon which can be found in the more complete libraries. Convenient access to most of them has been afforded by the Mercantile Library of St. Louis, through the courtesy of its librarian, Mr. Horace Kephart. The admirable collection of works pertaining to trans-Mississippi history which this library contains has been constantly at the author's service throughout these studies. But for the facilities thus afforded he would have found his task well-nigh impossible.

Important as have been the data derived from the foregoing sources, the main dependence has been upon original documents many of which are here brought to public attention for the first time. Among these may be included the early Missouri newspapers of St. Louis and Franklin. Although, strictly speaking, these papers should be classed as published authorities, they are not so in the sense of those just enumerated. They are practically inaccessible to the general public, for only a single complete file of each is still in existence.

The *Missouri Gazette* was the first newspaper published west of the Mississippi river. It began its career May 12, 1808. The title was changed to *Louisiana Gazette* December 7, 1809, and back to *Missouri Gazette* July 18, 1812. On March 20, 1822, the name was changed to *Missouri Republican*. This paper was the progenitor of the modern *St. Louis Republic*, and a nearly complete file is still preserved in the vaults of the *Republic* office. Through the indulgence of the proprietors of this journal the entire file down to 1850 has been examined in connection with this work. It abounds in valuable data and is the sole existing authority upon many obscure points. There were other St. Louis newspapers during much of the fur trade era, but they have not been so carefully preserved and are of less value than the old *Gazette*.

The *Missouri Intelligencer and Boone's Lick Advertiser* began its career in the little town of Franklin which stood (until the Missouri claimed it) on the opposite bank from the modern city of Boonville, Missouri, two hundred miles above the mouth of the river. It was for years the westernmost newspaper in the United States, and being directly on the route of travel to the West, it contained many valuable references to the early expeditions. These references are particularly important in the case of the Santa Fe trade which had its origin in Franklin. The files of this paper have been examined through the courtesy of Mr. Irvin Switzler of Columbia, Missouri, their present custodian, and by the assistance of Professor Garland C. Broadhead, late State Geologist of Missouri.

Niles Register, which is so valuable a mine of historic data, borrows most of its items pertaining to the trans-Mississippi territory during this period from the St. Louis and Franklin papers.

By far the most important collection of original data that has been consulted is the mass of documents relating to the Missouri and American Fur Companies, now in the possession of Mr. Pierre Chouteau of St. Louis, grandson of the distinguished fur merchant, the late Pierre Chouteau. These documents comprise correspondence, journals, records of business accounts and other papers, some of them dating back into the eighteenth century. Many of them are in the French language and a few in the Spanish. Those pertaining to the later years of the trade are nearly all in English. There are occasionally gaps and omissions and many documents have evidently been lost, or their present whereabouts are unknown; but enough are still in existence to settle most of the doubtful points upon the operations of the St. Louis traders. Mr. Pierre Chouteau has afforded every facility for examining these papers, and the enormous labor of going through them, musty and dusty with fifty to a hundred years of St. Louis atmosphere, has been patiently performed. To the kindness of Mr. Chouteau and of his father, the late C. P. Chouteau, whatever merit there may be in result of these researches is largely due.

Mr. M. L. Gray of St. Louis, administrator of the Sublette estate, has come into possession of much of the Ashley-Sublette-Campbell-Smith correspondence. Though limited in scope, these papers are the sole existing authority upon many points connected with the history of the Rocky Mountain Fur Company. Mr. Gray has generously authorized such use of them as was desired.

Mrs. William Mulkey of Kansas City, Missouri, daughter of the fur trader Andrew Drips, possesses much of the early correspondence of her distinguished father. That portion which relates to the special work of Major Drips as Indian agent for the tribes of the upper Missouri from 1842 to 1846 contains exhaustive data upon the history of that period.

Under the painstaking direction of Mr. William Seever, late secretary of the Missouri Historical Society of St. Louis, many original documents have been collected, and these likewise have been carefully examined. The more important are the journal of the Atkinson-O'Fallon expedition of 1825, and several unpublished essays upon early frontier history by William Waldo and others.

The late Captain Joseph La Barge, the most noted pilot of the Missouri river, whose experience upon that stream dated from 1832 and extended to the collapse of the steamboat business, and whose memory retained its power to a remarkable degree even in old age, was an eye witness of some of the events herein related and was personally acquainted with most of the actors. His oral testimony has been freely used throughout this work. There is in the possession of the La Barge family in St. Louis an old log book of the American Fur Company containing the record of the annual steamboat voyages up the Missouri for most of the decade from 1840 to 1850. This venerable record has been very useful in checking dates, events, and places.

The old legal papers in the Recorder's office in St. Louis contain much information bearing upon the transactions of the traders.

Through the accidents of fortune to which carelessness, if nothing worse, has more than once subjected the most valuable documents, the old records of the United States Indian Superintendency of St. Louis, for the tribes residing west of the Mississippi, were thrown away and would have been lost but for the diligence of a second-hand book dealer who thought them worth preserving. Some of these records were purchased by the Kansas Historical Society and are now preserved in the State Capitol at Topeka, where an opportunity was had of examining them. They are full of interesting data concerning the fur trade era down to 1830.

The American Fur Company letter books, open for inspection to visitors at the John Jacob Astor Hotel on Mackinaw Island, Michigan, contain practically the only reliable data upon the earlier operations of the company.

Captain Edwin L. Berthoud of Golden, Colorado, a careful student of the pioneer history of the West, improved the exceptional opportunities afforded him as engineer on the early Union Pacific surveys to collect much valuable information relating to events and characters of the fur trade. This information has been freely drawn upon throughout the present investigation.

Of the many other sources of information whose importance is only less than that of those already enumerated it would be impossible to make individual mention within the compass of these pages, but the author's debt to them is none the less gratefully acknowledged.

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THE AMERICAN FUR TRADE
OF
THE FAR WEST.

PART I. THE FUR TRADE.

CHAPTER I.

CHARACTER OF THE BUSINESS.

Importance of the fur trade — Era of the fur trade — St. Louis — Communication with New York — Furs and peltries — Methods of securing furs — Fur trade merchandise — Profits of the trade — Magnitude of the business — Number of persons employed — Losses of life and property.

IT is not an easy thing, at this period in American history, to appreciate how great a place in the affairs of former times the fur trade occupied. The trade has not by any means become extinct, nor, perhaps, greatly diminished in volume, if at all, as one may readily see by examining the statistics of sales in the leading markets of the world today. It is only in a relative sense that it has become less important. While it has remained stationary, other lines of trade have expanded many fold, until now it is almost lost sight of in the vast current of the world's affairs. Yet it is not long since it was a leading branch of commerce in the western world, nor more than sixty years since it was almost the only business transacted in the immense territory west of the Mississippi.

The fur trade of the Missouri valley began early in the eighteenth century, but it did not assume large proportions until after the cession of Louisiana to the United States and the exploring expeditions of Lewis and Clark and Pike. Its career thereafter continued practically unchecked until the tide of Western emigration set in, about 1843. The true period of the trans-Mississippi fur trade therefore embraces the thirty-seven years from 1807 to 1843.

In this trade the city of St. Louis was the principal, if not the only, emporium. It is true that the headquarters of the American Fur Company and of some other fur-trading concerns were in New York, but even in these cases the actual base from which all operations in the Western country were carried on was the city at the mouth of the Missouri. All parties were organized and all outfits were made up there. The returns of the trade en route to market all passed that way. Most of the traders resided there, and all non-resident firms maintained houses there. Great establishments arose for the convenience of the trade, while the port of St. Louis became a center of commerce almost as widespread as that of New York itself.

In the earlier years communication with New York and other seaboard towns took place principally by way of the Ohio river or the Great Lakes. In the latter case the route was sometimes by way of the Illinois river to Lake Michigan, thence either by water or across the country to Detroit, thence to Black Rock near Buffalo, and thence overland to New York; at other times it was by way of the Mississippi, the Fox and Wisconsin rivers to Lake Michigan, and the rest of the way by the route just described. In later years, after the use of steamboats became general, commerce usually passed by way of New Orleans.

The business of the fur trade, as the name implies, was mainly a traffic in furs and peltries. There were the fine furs obtained from the beaver, otter, mink, fox, and other animals, and the coarser products such as buffalo robes, bear and deer skins, which were not used as furs so much as for lap robes, heavy coats, and the like. Besides the furs and peltries there were regularly brought to St. Louis cargoes of buffalo tongues, buffalo and bear's tallow, and limited quantities of other products. The trade from the southwest, particularly from Santa Fe, dealt more largely in horses, mules, and specie.

There were several methods of procuring furs. The one most generally resorted to, and which on the whole yielded the largest results, was by traffic with the Indians. The first thought of the trader on going to a tribe of Indians was to supply himself with those articles which he knew had an attraction for the native fancy, to a large extent things of trifling value, but of showy appearance. The white man valued the native furs altogether beyond what the Indian was able to comprehend, and the latter was only too happy to find that he could trade them for that gaudy and glittering wealth which had been brought from a great distance to his country. Thus, in the early intercourse of the white man with the Indian, each gave to the other something that he valued lightly, and received in return something that he valued highly, and each felt a keen contempt for the stupid taste of the other. The trade, thus begun by imposition on the one side and ignorance on the other, developed, upon more thorough acquaintance, into a regular system.

All the fur companies regularly employed hunters and trappers who killed buffalo and caught beaver and gathered such other furs as came in their way. These men worked at fixed wages, and the product of their labor belonged to the company. No goods were brought into the country for furs taken in this way, except in payment of the men's wages, which were generally absorbed as fast as earned in new outfits and in liquor or feasting.

A third source from which the products of the country were obtained was the free hunter and trapper. These men worked on their own account, being bound to no company, and generally sold the product of their labor at some regular trading post or rendezvous, although they occasionally went to St. Louis with it themselves. A large portion of the payment for their furs, if sold in the interior, was in the form of articles required for new outfits, and for tobacco and liquor. The free trappers worked only in the finer kinds of fur.

It thus appears that, from whatever source the trader obtained his furs, he generally paid for them in merchandise carried into the country. This merchandise comprised such articles as were used in traffic with the Indians and for the equipments of trappers and hunters, the more necessary articles of food which could not be obtained from the country, and finally plenty of liquor and tobacco. To convey a clear idea of the variety of articles in a trading equipment, as well as the prices at which they were rated in the mountains, an extract is given in the accompanying footnote from the bill of sale by which General William H. Ashley transferred his outfit to the firm of Smith, Jackson and Sublette, near Great Salt Lake, July 18, 1826.[1]

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[1] The invoice included "gunpowder of the first and second quality at one dollar fifty per pound, lead one dollar per pound, shot one dollar twenty-five cents per pound, three point blankets at nine dollars each, green ditto at eleven dollars each, scarlet cloth at six dollars per yard, blue ditto common quality from four to five dollars per yard, butcher knives at seventy-five cents each, two and a half point blankets at seven dollars each, North West fuzils at twenty-four dollars each, tin kettles different sizes at two dollars per pound, sheet iron kettles at two dollars twenty-five cents per pound, square axes at two dollars fifty cents each, beaver traps at nine dollars each, sugar at one dollar per pound, coffee at one dollar and twenty-five cents a pound, raisins at one dollar fifty cents per pound, grey cloth of common quality at five dollars per yard, flannel common quality at one dollar fifty cents per yard, calicoes assorted at one dollar per yard, domestic cotton at one dollar twenty-five cents per yard, thread assorted at three dollars per pound, worsted binding at fifteen dollars per gross, finger rings at five dollars per gross, beads assorted at two dollars fifty cents per pound, vermilion at three dollars per pound, files assorted at two dollars fifty cents per pound, fourth proof rum reduced at thirteen dollars fifty cents per gallon, bridles assorted at seven dollars each, spurs at two dollars per pair, horse shoes and nails at two dollars per pound, tin pans

A large proportion of the merchandise of certain classes was imported from Europe, for at this early day American manufactures, in blankets and cloths particularly, were so inferior that the Indians did not want them, having learned through the British traders what a really good article was. It thus happened that while the furs found their principal market in Europe, the merchandise for which they were traded was mostly manufactured there. It would be interesting to trace an invoice of fur-trade merchandise from the manufactories of Europe in those early days to New York, New Orleans, St. Louis, and thence to the remote and obscure trading posts in the heart of the wilderness; and there, where the innocent beaver falls a victim to the wily trapper, to witness the exchange of these goods for his rich coat of fur, and to follow the latter back through St. Louis, New York, and London, to its final destination in the comfortable garments of the aristocracy of Europe. The complete round occupied fully four years. Could we know the price of the merchandise as it left the factory and its equivalent in fur as sold in the completed garment, the increase would be found to be several hundred per cent. This did not, of course, all represent profit. The insurance by sea, the losses by river and land, particularly in the Indian country, and the services of the many hands through which both the merchandise and the furs had to pass, account to some extent for the increase; but there was still a heavy increment that represented the profits of the trader. That these profits

assorted at two dollars per pound, handkerchiefs assorted at one dollar fifty cents each, ribbons assorted at three dollars per bolt, buttons at five dollars per gross, looking glasses at fifty cents each, flints at fifty cents per dozen, mockasin awls at twenty-five cents per dozen, tobacco at one dollar twenty-five cents per pound, copper kettles at three dollars per pound, iron buckles assorted at two dollars fifty cents per pound, fire steels at two dollars per pound, dried fruit at one dollar and fifty cents per pound, washing soap at one dollar twenty-five cents per pound, shaving soap at two dollars per pound, first quality James river tobacco at one dollar seventy-five cents per pound, steel bracelets at one dollar fifty cents per pair, large brass wire at two dollars per pound."

were enormous is sufficiently attested by the immense fortunes which were made in the fur trade.

In the matter of profits and losses, as well as in that of volume of business, there are numerous early authorities. Nathaniel J. Wyeth, a close observer, though rather too optimistic, has left on record an estimate of what a well-managed hunting expedition, in the best days of the fur trade, might reasonably be expected to accomplish.[2] According to this estimate the cost of an invoice of merchandise at the Teton mountains, or in that vicinity, was about four hundred per cent of its first cost in the eastern market. This increase was taken up by the expenses of interest, insurance, wagons, provisions for food until the buffalo country was reached, horses and mules, pack and riding saddles, blankets, pack covers, halters, bridles, horse shoeing, and other expenses incidental to the transportation of the goods across the plains. If the furs were obtained through hired trappers, the wages were paid in goods at an advance of about six hundred per cent upon their cost in the mountains. The wages of a hunter being counted at four hundred dollars per year and of common men who did the work of camp at two hundred, a party of twenty hunters and ten camp keepers, with their necessary horses (which "cost about $4 in goods prime cost in Boston or New York") could be kept in the field for one year for not to exceed two thousand dollars. With average success each hunter would take one hundred and twenty beaver skins in this time, the value of which, in Boston or New York, was about one thousand dollars. With due allowance for the cost of the return journey, the outlay of two thousand dollars would net in the neighborhood of fifteen thousand dollars. "This, as you will perceive, will leave a large profit," is the logical deduction by the author of this simple calculation. Of course such successful enterprises were of rare occurrence, for there were many sources of loss in these perilous expeditions, but there are nevertheless authenticated instances of very high profits. In 1827 the house of Bernard Pratte and Company joined with General Ashley in equipping an expedition for the mountains. The whole enterprise lasted only about six months and netted the company seventy per cent profit on their investment.

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[2] *Sources of the History of Oregon*, pp. 66 and 75.

In the Santa Fe trade forty per cent was a high profit, while the average was between fifteen and twenty per cent.

In regard to the magnitude of the trade it is difficult to give definite figures; but the following table of statistics compiled about 1832 by Indian Agent John Dougherty, embracing the fifteen years from 1815 to 1830, gives a fair idea, not only of the extent of the trade, but of the wages paid, the prices of furs, and the profits realized, during this period.[8]

EXPENDITURES.	
20 clerks, 15 years, @ $500 per year	$ 150,000
200 men, 15 years, @ $150 per year	450,000
Merchandise	1,500,000
RETURNS.	
26,000 buffalo skins per yr. for 15 yrs. @ $3 each	$1,170,000
25,000 beaver skins per yr. for 15 yrs. @ $4 each	1,500,000
4,000 otter skins per yr. for 15 yrs. @ $3 each	180,000
12,000 coon skins per yr. for 15 yrs. @ 25c. each	45,000
150,000 lbs. deer skins per yr. for 15 yrs. @ 33c. per lb.	742,500
37,500 muskrat skins per yr. for 15 yrs. @ 20c. each.	112,500
Total	$3,750,000
Total profit	$1,650,000
Average annual expenditure	$ 140,000
Average annual returns	250,000
Average annual profit	110,000

At an anniversary celebration of the founding of St.

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[8] The actual number of persons engaged in the fur trade, either as traders or employers, it is impossible to determine with accuracy; but it was not large. Including those who traded to Santa Fe, it is not probable that the number ever exceeded one thousand, while the average was nearer half that number. Judged by the volume of business alone the fur trade was of relatively insignificant proportions; but its importance and historic interest depend upon other and quite different considerations.

Louis, held on the 15th of February, 1847, it was stated that the annual value of the St. Louis fur trade for the past forty years had been between two and three hundred thousand dollars; and this may be taken as a fair estimate for the period covered by our present studies.

The losses incident to the business of the fur trade were, in the very nature of things, large. They arose almost entirely from encounters with hostile Indians and involved both life and property. The danger of losing horses was an ever present peril, for even friendly Indians had no compunctions about stealing these animals. Reliable statistics covering the period from 1820 to 1831 give the losses of life from the Indians at one hundred and fifty-one and the loss of property at a hundred thousand dollars. It is probable that, for the entire period from 1806 to 1843, these figures should be doubled.[4]

Such is a general view of the American fur trade as conducted from St. Louis during the first half of the nineteenth century. Its more important special features, such as its relation to the Indians, the traffic in liquor, the evils of competition among the traders, the class of men engaged in the business, and the kind of life which it developed, will be separately considered.

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[4] According to Andrew Drips there died at the hands of the Indians in the year 1844 thirteen employes of the licensed traders and nine free trappers.

CHAPTER II.

RELATIONS WITH THE INDIANS.

Importance of the Indian to the fur trade — Relation of the trader and the Indian — Policy of the government toward the Indian — The factory system — Mistake of the government — Downfall of the system.

THE most important single factor in the business of the fur trade was the presence of the Indian in the country where that trade was carried on. It controlled the whole system of conducting the business. To a considerable extent the Indians were themselves the producers: that is, they trapped the beaver and hunted the buffalo, whose skins they exchanged for whatever the white men brought into their country. Even when the companies did their own trapping it was necessary to take account of the Indian, for he did not always approve of the invasion of his country by the paleface, and often resisted it by force. The hunting and trapping parties had therefore to be ever on the alert lest they fall victims to a crafty and savage foe.

Had there been no native inhabitants in the country the conduct of the fur trade would have been radically different. All the furs would have been taken directly by the hunters and trappers. There would have been but few permanent posts instead of the many that were required to accommodate the various tribes. No merchandise would have been carried into the interior to exchange for furs, for there would have been no one to exchange it with. The innumerable tragedies of the plains, in which so many brave men lost their lives, would not have taken place. It is indeed difficult to estimate the degree to which the fur trade was controlled by the Indian, while its far-reaching counter-influence upon the tribes cannot, at this remote time, be adequately realized.

The relation of the trader to the Indian was the most natural and congenial of any which the two races have ever sustained toward each other. Properly conducted, it fitted perfectly with the Indian's previous mode of life, really promoted his happiness, and gave him no cause for complaint. It enabled him to pursue his natural occupation of hunting, while it introduced just enough of the civilized customs of exchange to furnish him with those simpler articles which directly promoted the comfort of his daily life. The Indian likewise fitted in perfectly with the white man's purposes of trade. It was better that the native occupant of the soil, so far as practicable, should garner its resources and bring them in for exchange, than that the white hunters should scatter themselves in lawless bands over the country for this purpose. By far the larger part of the fur was taken by the Indians and came into the possession of the traders only by exchange, and it was in this traffic that the white man first made his acquaintance with the tribes. From this starting point the two races came gradually into closer contact until finally the Indian became dependent upon his white brother, relinquishing little by little his former method of life, acquiring new wants, becoming corrupted by new vices, and drifting insensibly into that intricate relationship with the United States government which is known in our history as the Indian Question.

It would be alike idle and unjust at this period of our national history to arraign the methods of the government in its dealings with the Indians — idle because the past is behind us; unjust because, whatever its failures, the purposes of the government towards the native races within its domain have ever been those of paternal benevolence. A fundamental misconception of the nature of the Indian problem underlies the common assumption that a very different result might and ought to have ensued, and that the policy of our government in its treatment of the Indian has been actuated by motives unworthy of an enlightened people. It ignores the operation of that evolutionary process by which a weaker race disappears before a superior in spite of all that laws or military force can do to prevent. That the aboriginal tribes were doomed to complete displacement on the soil of their nativity after once the European races had discovered this continent is a proposition that few will care to deny. A change so fundamental, involving loss of land, institutions, customs, and the innermost functions of social life, was not one that could be accomplished without pain and apparent wrong. But the change was as inevitable as the progress of the stars, and the only ground for criticism of those concerned in it is whether or not they have unnecessarily added to its burden of sorrow and suffering.

The policy of government, so far as it has been able to control this course of unavoidable change, has always been the highest good of the Indian. While it was powerless to save the Indian's lands, or to preserve his customs from extinction, it has ever sought to ameliorate an unhappy situation and to secure the most ample reparation for an irremediable loss. The failures of the government have never been those of purpose, but rather those of lack of ability to carry its purposes into effect. The very nature of our government, essentially weak in controlling its citizens and in exercising arbitrary interference with what they deem to be their rights, was a powerful drawback as compared with the more centralized power of a government like that of Great Britain. This weakness showed itself particularly in those details of administration by which its humane and benevolent purposes were to have been accomplished. The prostitution of the Indian service to mere personal or partisan advantage, and the placing of those delicate and vital questions at the mercy of political adventurers, were crimes which must ever leave a stain on the American name. Herein, whether avoidably or not, the government has been irredeemably at fault. It has sinned knowingly — sinned with the consequences patent to its eyes — and from the paltriest and basest of motives that can guide the policy of a nation.

Two examples bearing directly upon our present work will be cited to show how strong has been the purpose of the government to deal justly by the Indian, but how helpless it has been in carrying out this purpose. The first is that of the government factory system established to control the trade with the Indians, and the second is that of the abolition of the liquor traffic in the Indian country.

The factory system which prevailed during the first two decades of the century arose from a growing conviction on the part of the government that a solution of the Indian question could not be indefinitely postponed; and that, however it might be deferred by moving the Indians farther and farther West, it would ever arise anew and clamor for settlement. It was therefore better to grapple with it seriously from the start, and to this end it was important that the government should stand in closer relations with the tribes. It was justly concluded that it would be wiser for the government to conduct the Indian trade itself. It could thus secure to the Indian his due, protect him from imposture, save him from the deadly effects of alcohol, and wean him gradually from his tribal life, so that, when the tide of settlement should have swallowed up his domains and have destroyed his ancient means of subsistence, he would accept his new situation without deep reluctance.[1]

To this end Congress in 1796 made an appropriation for the establishment of a "liberal trade with the Indians." Factories or trading houses were located at various points in the Indian country, at which was kept the usual line of Indian goods.[2] It was intended to dispose of these goods to the Indians in exchange for furs at rates which would simply make the factories self-sustaining. In this way the Indian would get his goods at cost, an advantage which it was thought would be so palpable that he would patronize the factories in preference to the private trader.

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[1] "These views are substantially founded upon the conviction that it is the true policy and earnest desire of the government to draw its savage neighbors within the pale of civilization."

W. H. Crawford, Secretary of War.

[2] The factories were mainly located east of the Mississippi, and only one on the Missouri, viz., at Fort Osage, forty miles below the present site of Kansas City.

The system was well conceived and it should have succeeded. The reason why it did not succeed is perfectly apparent and must have been so at the time. The government did not have the courage of its convictions. It should have taken the field to itself, just as it does in the carrying of mails, the coining of money, and the making of war. Instead of doing this it granted trading licenses to private parties and thus degraded itself to the level of a competing trader among a horde of irresponsible and frequently lawless rivals. The fate of the factory system was thus sealed from the beginning. The practices of the private traders were not such as the government could afford to permit in its agents. It was a part of the government plan to let the Indians hunt as of old, untrammeled by the presence of the white man, and bring furs to the factory for sale. It was also, though probably unwisely, a rule not to supply the Indians on credit, hoping, rather chimerically, to inculcate habits of thrift in this way. The shrewd private trader promptly took advantage of this situation. He advanced an outfit on credit to the improvident Indian when about to start on his hunt, and thus virtually laid a mortgage on the products of his labor. He did not await his debtor's return, but made payment sure by accompanying him on his hunts, and securing his furs as fast as they were taken.

The factories would not dispense liquor to the natives, but the private trader smuggled it into the country and was thus armed with that weapon, which, more than any other, was certain of victory in any contest for the favor of the Indian.

The factories did not use the best articles in their trade, for the rule of requiring the government to patronize home industries, even when to its great disadvantage, excluded it from the markets where the best goods were to be had. It was thus handicapped again, for the Indian was not slow to note the difference between the goods offered him by the government and those brought to him by the private trader.

The trader who followed the Indians in their hunts was usually well acquainted with them, understood their language and customs and was virtually one of themselves. The government trader, on the other hand, was a salaried official, most likely a political employe, not versed in the business of dealing with the Indians, and essentially a stranger to them.

The government, moreover, in its intercourse with the Indians, was slow to grasp the fact that it was not dealing with experienced business men, but with children. It made them few presents, and often failed to observe those childish formalities so essential in the eyes of the punctilious savage. The private trader profited by all this, and in spite of the cheaper price of goods at the factories, he often succeeded in securing the greater part of the trade.

It is apparent that none of these drawbacks would have had any weight if private traders had been excluded from the field. The government could not descend to their methods consistently with the policy of dignified bearing and paternal regard for its dependents, which were to be the chief aim and end of its proposed system of trade. It should therefore have saved itself from the humiliation of these small rivalries and competitions by taking the entire field to itself. It would have been in every way better for all concerned, except the individual trader. It is a common fallacy to assume that, because the government may not be able to compete with private individuals in the transaction of a particular business, it therefore cannot transact that business as well as they. No mistake could be greater. The fact that the government may be driven from a field, because it will not stoop to the methods of private competition, is no reason to assume that, if sole occupant, it would not render the public better service than private parties would.

The fatal error is to enter the field as a competitor, for this deprives the government of the power to carry out its better ideas, and at once degrades it to the standards of business employed against it.

So it was in the case under consideration. A system established for the good of the Indians soon became, in these untoward circumstances, unpopular with its beneficiaries, and excited the contempt of those untutored beings who were little prone to investigate hidden causes, but always judged from superficial appearances. In proportion as it fell in the esteem of the Indians the traders became bold in their outcries against it. The great American Fur Company was its most formidable assailant through the aggressive attacks of Ramsay Crooks,[3] that clear-headed, incisive, and fearless man of affairs who had risen to the general agency of the company. He was ably seconded by the St. Louis traders and the campaign in Congress was skilfully handled by that astute leader (or rather, follower) of the people, Missouri's greatest statesman, Senator Thomas H. Benton. The fight was a prolonged and severe one, for the government defended the system with a consciousness of its high merits and of the fact that it had never had half a chance for its life. The struggle ended in the overthrow of the system in March, 1822.

In spite of certain defects of management the factory system, during its twenty-six years' existence, clearly established its ability to fulfil the expectations of its founders. No better evidence of this need be sought than in the

[3] The vigorous manner in which Crooks attacked the factory system is well illustrated in the forcible language with which he congratulated Senator Benton upon its overthrow. "I have been honored this morning," he wrote on April 1, 1822, "with your favor of Friday last and hasten to congratulate you on your decisive victory. . . . . The result is the best possible proof of the value to the country of talents, intelligence, and perseverance, and you deserve the unqualified thanks of the community for destroying the pious monster, since to your unwearied exertions and sound practical knowledge of the whole subject the country is indebted for its deliverance from so gross and unholy an imposition [!]."

strenuous efforts of its enemies to get rid of it. The correspondence of the times shows that the factories absorbed a goodly share of the trade. "As it [the Indian trade] now stands," wrote Charles Gratiot to John Jacob Astor in 1814, "it is too precarious for anybody to hazard anything in it unless the factories were to be abolished." The official records show that until near the close of its career, in spite of the obstacles it had to contend with and the losses growing out of the War of 1812, it was self-sustaining.

Thus ended in failure a system fraught with possibilities of great good to the Indian — a system, which, if followed out as it should have been, would have led the Indian to his new destiny by easy stages and would have averted the long and bloody wars, the corruption and bad faith, which have gained for a hundred years of our dealings with the Indians the unenviable distinction of a "Century of Dishonor."

CHAPTER III.

EVIL EFFECTS OF COMPETITION.

Example of the Hudson Bay Company — Weakness of the government — Door thrown open to all — Influence upon the Indians — British competition.

HAVING withdrawn from direct participation in the Indian trade, the obvious duty of the government was to adopt some method of control which should secure to the Indian the benefits intended to flow from the factory system. There was only one way to do this, and that was to grant to some company a monopoly of the trade. The example of the Hudson Bay Company is evidence of the great advantage to all concerned of the exclusion of competition in a business like the Indian trade. Except in those years when that company was struggling for supremacy with the Northwest Company, or when competing with American traders along the border, the conduct of its business was admirably adapted to secure the greatest good to the Indian. The sale of liquor was interdicted. The trade was upon a fixed basis as to prices. The traders were men of long experience with the Indians and nearly all related to them by marriage. In all its bearings the policy pursued by this great company combined what was best in both the factory system and the practice of private traders in the United States. The result was that the company was nearly always at peace with the Indians and avoided those needless misunderstandings which produced such deplorable results south of the boundary.

There can be no doubt that this system of monopoly was better for all concerned than the unrestrained competition which was the rule among American traders. It was immeasurably better for the Indians. It was much more conducive to the preservation of the fur-bearing animals. It did not operate any more favorably for the few at the head and against the many in the ranks than did the system of trade in the United States; for surely the magnates of the Hudson Bay Company did not outdo Astor, the Chouteaus, the Ashleys, the Campbells, and the Sublettes in the accumulation of fortunes, while the underlings of the great monopoly were in every way better off than those of the American companies.

Here again the government was confronted by its own weakness. The same unreasonable prejudice which drove it out of the Indian trade opposed with tenfold greater vehemence the granting of any exclusive privilege in that trade. The mere suggestion at one time that such a privilege be granted the American Fur Company (for Ramsay Crooks was ready enough to take into the bosom of his company the "pious monster" which he had lately made such exertions to destroy) called forth a storm of protest which caused the matter to be dropped as if it had been a red hot iron. The spirit of American institutions was opposed to monopoly of all kinds, and in a government where the power rests directly with the people, the creation of such a monopoly was an impossibility. Thus, in two essential respects, the government of the United States was powerless to carry out the policy which it knew to be best.

There was only one course left — to make the field free to all comers with special favors to none. That was the true democratic policy but the most unwise that could have been adopted. It opened up that never-ending commercial rivalry in which the survival of the strongest was the only road to supremacy. It was a fatal error, as we shall see, and one that lay at the root of many of our later troubles with the Indians.

The principle thus introduced into the Indian trade was indeed no other than that which obtains in nearly all branches of business and is considered the corner stone of commercial prosperity. But there were two reasons why it would not work in this particular situation. The first was that the business itself was so interwoven with the question of Indian control that it partook largely of the nature of government and could not safely be intrusted to irresponsible persons. The second was that in the region where the trade was carried on the arm of the law did not yet reach, and there was nothing but physical force to restrain acts of violence.

Upon the Indians the influence of this rivalry was most pernicious, and was deeply deplored at the time by those who understood how things were going. Thomas Biddle, as early as 1819, writing to General Atkinson from Council Bluffs, where the influence of the factory system never reached, thus characterized the practices of the traders: "These traders are continually endeavoring to lessen each other in the eyes of the Indians, not only by abusive words, but by all sorts of low tricks and maneuvers. If a trader trusts an Indian, his opponent uses all his endeavors to purchase the furs which the Indian may take, or to prevent in any way his opponent being paid. Each trapper supports his favorite chief, which not only produces intestine commotions and divisions in the tribe, but destroys the influence of the principal chief, who should always be under the control of the government. . . The Indians, witnessing the efforts of these people to cheat and injure each other, and knowing no other and more important white men, readily imbibe the idea that all white men are alike bad. The imposing appearance of the army equipments of the white men [referring to the Yellowstone Expedition of 1819] and the novelty and convenience of their merchandise had impressed the Indians with a high idea of their power and importance, but the avidity with which beaver skins are sought after, the tricks and wrangling made use of, and the degradations submitted to in obtaining them, have induced a belief that the whites can not exist without them, and have made a great change in their opinion of our importance, our justice, and our power." When it is considered that evidence like this was before Congress in 1822, and that that body understood into what a gulf it was leaping in throwing the Indian trade open to everybody, its helplessness to resist those popular prejudices which frequently masquerade under the guise of public opinion is very apparent.

In 1833 Thomas Fitzpatrick was robbed of a large amount of property by the Crow Indians at the instigation of the agents of the American Fur Company. He would probably have done the same towards them with a fair opportunity, but now, smarting under the loss he had sustained, he was unsparing in his condemnation of the whole system, and uttered some very pertinent truths in a letter of complaint which he wrote to General Ashley, then member of Congress from Missouri, asking for redress. "If there is not some alteration made in the system of business in this country very soon," he wrote, "it will become a nuisance and a disgrace to the United States. With so many different companies roving about from one tribe to another, each telling a different tale, and slandering each other to such a degree as to disgust the Indians, they will evidently all become hostile to Americans." Unfortunately, there was no "alteration" in the business, but it went on as it had gone before, with every circumstance of villainy and debauchery which the vindictive ingenuity of these lawless freebooters could devise. One of the worst features of the business was the use which was made of liquor to gain the favor of the Indian. So far-reaching were its effects upon the Indian trade and the Indian question in general that a separate consideration of the subject will be given in the following chapter.

There was another form of competition in the early fur trade the real importance of which it is difficult to determine, but which the traders thought amounted to a great deal. This was the competition of the British traders for the custom of the Indians who lived near the boundary. To judge from the frequent complaints of the American traders, the matter was a really serious one, but it is not possible to discover any specific instance in which they suffered from this cause. The British had the advantage in this alleged competition of being allowed to import liquor, which was prohibited to the Americans. They could also sell their goods cheaper because Americans had to pay import duty. Both of these matters were made the subject of repeated expostulation with the government by officials of the American Fur Company.[1]

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[1] Thus, John Jacob Astor to Senator Benton, Jan. 29, 1829: "It is known that none of the woolen goods fit for the Indian trade, such as Indian blankets, strouds, and cloths of particular descriptions, are as yet manufactured in this country. We are therefore obliged to import them from England, and it so happens that those are just the articles paying the heaviest duty. The English traders have theirs free of duty, which enables them to bring their goods 60 per cent and over cheaper than what we pay and they are thereby enabled to undersell us. Their furs and skins cost them little more than half what we have to pay for ours. But this is not all. They are by these means enabled to send their furs here [New York] and actually do come and undersell the American traders. It is unaccountable that they should be permitted to bring their furs here free of duty, while we, if we send any to the British dominions, are obliged to pay 15 per cent duty."

CHAPTER IV.

THE LIQUOR TRAFFIC.

Desire of the government to exclude liquor from the Indian country — Use of liquor by British traders — The practice of smuggling — Fraudulent use of liquor — Advantages of monoply — Liquor for boatmen — Competition of the British — Extracts from correspondence — Law prohibiting liquor traffic — Inferences.

THE control of the liquor traffic was the second of the examples previously cited of the helplessness of the government to give effect to its better intentions toward the Indian. The degrading and demoralizing influence of intoxicating spirits upon the Indian was well understood from the experience of two centuries of frontier life. The government earnestly desired to avoid, in its future dealings with these people, a repetition of these evils, and this was one of the considerations which led to the establishment of the factory system. When that system was abandoned, and even before, great care was taken to guard against abuses by private traders who were forbidden to sell liquor to the Indians. They were, however, allowed to take a certain amount on their expeditions for the use of their employes; but when it became apparent that the liquor so taken was most of it *given* (not sold, for that would violate the law!) to the Indians, this privilege was taken away, and the importation of liquor into the Indian country was interdicted altogether. Inspectors were stationed at Leavenworth, Bellevue, and other places to enforce this prohibition.

But the efforts of the government were wholly ineffectual. In opening the door to free competition in the Indian trade, it had nullified in advance any provision which it might enact for the exclusion of ardent spirits. Liquor was the most powerful weapon which the traders could employ in their struggles with one another. Its attraction for the Indian was irresistible, and by means of it he could be robbed of everything he possessed. No trader could do any business without it if his opponents were supplied with it. It was therefore the one indispensable article which the traders must have at any hazard.[1]

Another condition operated to the same end. The British traders made free use of liquor along the border when in competition with the American traders. As they were outside of even the nominal control of the United States Government, the American traders were completely at their mercy unless they could use liquor in their turn. Earnest efforts were made to secure permission to use it in this particular locality, but the government, rightly fearing that a qualified restriction would be of little value, and that liquor once in the Indian country would find its way wherever it was wanted, steadily refused any relaxation of its rules.

There thus arose that stupendous practice of smuggling ardent spirits into the Indian country, which was a prominent feature of the entire history of the Indian trade. The depths of rascality into which this traffic fell might well stagger belief were they not substantiated by the most positive evidence. The liquor was generally imported in the form of alcohol, because of the smaller compass for the same amount of poison. It was stored in every conceivable form of package. In overland journeys it was generally carried in short, flat kegs, which would rest conveniently on the sides of a pack mule. When carried by water it was concealed in flour barrels, bales of merchandise, or anywhere that it would most likely escape discovery. Some instances of the sharp practice indulged in to avoid detection by government inspectors will presently be given.[2]

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[1] "So violent is the attachment of the Indian for it that he who gives most is sure to obtain the furs, while should any one attempt to trade without it he is sure of losing ground with his antagonist. No bargain is ever made without it." Thomas Biddle to Henry Atkinson, Oct. 29, 1819.

In retailing the poisonous stuff (a pure article never found its way to the Indian) the degree of deception and cheating could not have been carried further. A baneful and noxious substance to begin with, it was retailed with the most systematic fraud, often amounting to a sheer exchange of nothing for the goods of the Indian. It was the policy of the shrewd trader first to get his victim so intoxicated that he could no longer drive a good bargain. The Indian, becoming more and more greedy for liquor, would yield up all he possessed for an additional cup or two. The voracious trader, not satisfied with selling his alcohol at a profit of many thousand per cent, would now begin to cheat in quantity. As he filled the little cup which was the standard of measure, he would thrust in his big thumb and diminish its capacity by one-third. Sometimes he would substitute another cup with the bottom thickened up by running tallow in until it was a third full. He would also dilute the liquor until, as the Indian's senses became more and more befogged, he would treat him to water pure and simple. In all this outrageous imposition, by which the Indian was virtually robbed of his goods, it must be confessed that the tricks of the trader had at least this in their favor that they spared the unhappy and deluded savage from a portion of the liquor which he supposed he was getting. The duplicity and crime for which this unhallowed traffic is responsible in our relations with the Indians have been equalled but seldom in even the most corrupt of nations.

This is another instance where the granting of a monopoly in the trade would have been the better plan. The more responsible companies always deplored the use of liquor, and, moreover, ran great risks of detection if they smuggled it into the country. The American Fur Company, for example, shipped its merchandise in great cargoes up the river, and it was impossible to evade inspection by the authorities at Bellevue or Leavenworth. But the small trader, who either went overland or picked his stealthy way in small craft up the river, could easily escape discovery in that unsettled country. It thus resulted that, while the company would have been glad to join hands with the government in abolishing the liquor traffic, it was met at its distant posts by these lawless adventurers equipped with this never-failing passport to the Indian's favor. It was forced in self-defense to violate the regulations and to become a common smuggler with those who had no standing to lose.

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[2] See Part IV., Chapter V.

In order that the view here given of the vital importance of the liquor traffic in the business of the fur trade may not appear exaggerated, some extracts will be given from the correspondence of the traders and the observations of travelers during the period when competition was at its height.

The two extracts which follow show how the privileges granted to traders in their annual licenses to trade, before the introduction of liquor into the Indian country was prohibited altogether, were systematically abused: "Permission is hereby granted to William L. Sublette to take to the places designated for carrying on trade........ (places enumerated here) not exceeding four hundred and fifty gallons of whiskey for the special use of his boatmen, etc." He was compelled to give bond not to sell liquor to the Indians. The shallowness of this pretext will be apparent when it is known that in the year to which this license relates, 1832, Sublette took his expedition overland all the way to the valley of Pierre's Hole and back and did not have, nor expected to have, occasion to use a single boatman.

Pierre Chouteau, Jr., in a letter to Kenneth McKenzie, dated April 25, 1828, thus explains how liquor was gotten to the posts of the interior at that time: "The government does not allow us to use liquor in our trade with the Indians. On the contrary it is expressly forbidden. But it is permitted to take one gill per day for each boatman during the period of their absence — that is, for twelve months. It is on this ground that I have obtained permission to take an amount corresponding to fifty men, twenty-seven of whom set out from here and twenty-three are now up the country. I took the names of those who are with you, without knowing whether you will keep them or send them back. That makes no difference, however, for I explained the matter to General Clark." In this way about three hundred gallons of alcohol went up the river to relieve the necessities of the various posts.

When the bill for the absolute prohibition of the importation of liquor into the Indian country was before Congress, John Jacob Astor, in a letter to General W. H. Ashley, member of Congress, dated April 2nd, 1822, thus explained the situation at the upper posts of the Missouri in reference to their British competitors: "Wherever the trade is exclusively in the hands of our own citizens, there can be no doubt that the uniform and complete enforcement of such a law will be beneficial both to the Indians and the traders; but at those points where we come in contact with the Hudson's Bay Company we must either abandon the trade or be permitted to use it, to a limited extent at least, in order to counteract, in some measure, the influence of our rivals, who can introduce any quantity they please.

"Our new posts on the Missouri river above the Mandans must yield to the superior attractions of our opponents, unless the government will permit us like them to use spirituous liquors; and the friendly relations we have at last succeeded in establishing with the Blackfeet (those inveterate enemies of the Americans) at so much expense and personal hazard, must inevitably be destroyed, and the British be restored to the unlimited control they have heretofore exercised over these Indians.

"If the Hudson's Bay Company did not employ ardent spirits against us, we would not ask for a single drop. But without it, competition is hopeless; for the attraction is irresistible; and if the British traders alone possess the temptation, they will unquestionably not only maintain, but rivet their influence over all the Indians within their reach, to the detriment of the United States, in alienating their affections from us, and in the loss of a trade to which we have an undoubted claim."

The bill nevertheless became a law in the July following.[3] There can be no doubt that the American Fur Company looked forward to its possible enforcement with a great deal of misgiving. "The late law," wrote Pierre Chouteau, Jr., to Mr. Astor, "prohibiting absolutely the carrying of liquor to our trading establishments will do us an incalculable injury at all the posts above the mouth of the Yellowstone." Strenuous efforts were made to secure some relaxation in the enforcement of the law, and the arguments used are thus recorded by Ramsay Crooks, who urged them in person before the Secretary of War: "I explained fully to Governor Cass that our sole and only wish for a partial supply was to enable us to cope with our Hudson Bay opponents at our new posts above the Mandans, relinquishing it voluntarily everywhere else as advantageous both to the natives and ourselves. . . . I pointed out the pernicious tendency of its exclusion on our side, while they enjoyed the privilege to an unlimited extent; and the absolute certainty of the country being deluged by a larger supply than usual, purposely to show their superiority over us, degrading us, and with us the government, in the eyes of the Indians, by our withholding from them a gratification which was abundantly and cheerfully furnished by the British. I also placed before the secretary the dangers of our situation flowing from this source, when stimulated by disappointment, and excited by our rivals to institute comparisons between themselves and us, which inevitably must lead to conclusions altogether unfavorable to the Americans. I pressed upon his attention the efforts we had made at the risk of the lives of our people, and much pecuniary cost, to open an intercourse with our mortal enemies, the Blackfeet, who had on every occasion waged an exterminating war upon our citizens for upward of twenty years — the great value of the trade we had already gained, and the prospect of a large increase we might calculate upon, when, by our peaceful relations with the savages of the Falls of the Missouri and Maria's river, we could extend our intercourse to the Flatheads, and other tribes — and lastly, the loss of influence which the government must sustain in the belief that they would entertain of its poverty, when contrasted with the affluence and liberality of the British, who supplied every want, while we denied them the greatest of all gratifications. I showed him the entire prostration of all the philanthropic hopes of the government in enacting the late law, and tried to convince him that it would do infinitely more harm than good until the article was excluded from the Hudson's Bay territories, as completely as on our side of the boundary.

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[3] An interesting sidelight on the passage of this law is contained in a letter from Ramsay Crooks to Pierre Chouteau, Jr., dated November 16, 1832: "I regret truly the blindness of the government in refusing liquor for the trade of the country in the vicinity of the Hudson's Bay Posts, because the prohibition will not prevent the Indians getting it from our rivals, to our most serious injury. It *might* have been possible last winter at Washington to accomplish some modification had we been there together. I have, however, very strong doubts on the subject, because Gov. Cass is a temperance society man in every sense of the word, and it was with his full consent and approbation that the law for its exclusion from the Indian country was passed by the last Congress, and though I did not go to the Great City, the Chairmen of the Indian Committees were made as fully acquainted with the subject in all its bearings as if I had detailed all the facts to them in person. Had Ashley opposed the bill, his presumed knowledge of Indian trade would probably have been more than a match for the influence of the Secretary of War. But it was got up as one of the *government* measures of the session, and your representative, as a good Jackson man, gave it his unqualified support, and secured its passage."

"To all this the secretary replied, that the law was imperative, and the executive had no discretion but to see it executed to the letter. But as we only desired to use liquor in our own *defense,* it would give him pleasure to bring the subject to the notice of the President and the Secretary of State (in accordance with a wish I expressed when I found that nothing else could be obtained) who, he was sure, would at once enter into a correspondence with the British, and do all in their power to induce *that* government to exclude from the trade of the Hudson's Bay Company every species of spirituous liquors, as effectually, as by law we have done on our side."

The government adhered strictly to its policy of excluding liquor from the Indian country, and as a consequence the fur trade was characterized during all these years by the crime of smuggling with every incident of fraud and trickery known to that business. It is doubtful if the actual quantity of liquor imported was sensibly diminished by the prohibition while its effects were aggravated by the clandestine methods which the traders were forced to employ. The American Fur Company was pushed to the severest straits of all, for its great prominence made it more open to detection. At one time it undertook to evade the law by manufacturing liquor in the Indian country. This episode, which created a great sensation at the time, will be considered in another place; and instances will be cited to show how shrewd the company's traders became in getting their wares past the government inspectors stationed along the river. There were two occasions in particular when the pressure upon the American Fur Company was very great, and when the use of liquor was deemed by its agents absolutely essential to its continuance in the country. The first of these was in 1833 and 1834, just after the prohibitory law was passed, and when the company was threatened with the powerful opposition of Sublette and Campbell. The other was ten years later, when it was again threatened by a formidable opposition — the firm of Fox, Livingston and Company of New York. During all the intermediate period, however, there were constant demands by the agents of the company in the field for more liquor,[4] and regular replies

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[4] The imperious character of these demands is well illustrated in the following letter from Honoré Picotte at Fort Pierre to Pierre Chouteau, Jr., dated January 4, 1843:

"In one thing they [Fox, Livingston and Company] have the advanfrom St. Louis, warning the agents of the perils involved in sending any.

The house in St. Louis nevertheless made every effort to meet the pressing demands of its agents, and generally succeeded, not infrequently, it is suspected, by the connivance of the authorities — at least the following instructions from Mr. Chouteau to Mr. Picotte would imply as much: "The quantity of A——sent," he wrote March 31, 1840, "is somewhat short of what was asked for, but we think sufficient. In regard to this article, it has been highly necessary that every possible care be taken, both to prevent its abuse and to lessen the quantity distributed. Information respecting this matter has already reached the Department of the Attorney General, and if our Mr. Sanford had not been at Washington this winter most opportunely, we should unquestionably have been prevented from sending any at all this season. You will therefore perceive the necessity of

tage and that is liquor. We know to a certainty that they have five barrels of alcohol at Cedar Island, seventeen at Fort Union [Fort Mortimer near Fort Union], seven of which were taken up by the steamboat New Haven last fall from Fort George, and three at Fort Clark. Mr. Laidlaw writes me that he has no doubt they will open their liquor as soon as the trade commences, and he says that he has not wherewith to oppose them in that article. If, during the winter, they sell but part of their liquor, they will next year send the remainder to Fort McKenzie. By that time we will not have a single drop in the country. With their liquor on one side and the Hudson Bay Company's on the other we are sure to lose the trade of that part next season. Pratte and Cabanne have twelve kegs *en cache* at the head of the Cheyenne which they will trade in the spring if they are not closely watched, and every day some one comes over from the St. Peter's [river in Minnesota] with that article, not in great quantity, it is true, but enough to injure the trade. Under these circumstances you see plainly that we must lose the Blackfeet and Assiniboine trade next year *unless we have liquor.* I therefore request you to use all your influence to send us some of that article next year, say four or five hundred gallons in canteens, kegs, even in bottles, if in no other way. It will require that quantity to compete with Cutting [agent of Fox, Livingston and Company]. Perhaps Mr. Chouteau can get a permit. I will bind myself [!] not to make use of it among the Sioux, Rees, Gros Ventres [Minnetarees], or Mandans. At all events *we must have it.*"

some amendment in this matter, and we trust that you will not fail to use every vigilance to effect it."

The extracts which have been given here from the unpublished records of the times exhibit in a clear light the deplorable effects of the liquor traffic in those early years, not only upon the business of the fur trade, but upon the native tribes as well. They show that, while the government steadfastly maintained on its statute books a regulation designed to protect the Indian, it was never able to carry it into effect. They afford another proof, if one were necessary, of the truth that the mere embodiment of a moral purpose in legislation, regardless of its bearing upon the practical affairs of life, is no guarantee of its successful accomplishment. Finally they furnish an early illustration of the modern aphorism that "Prohibition does not prohibit."

CHAPTER V.

CHARACTERISTIC FEATURES OF THE FUR TRADE.

Means of transportation — The keelboat — The steamboat — The canoe — The mackinaw boat — The bull-boat — Steamboat voyages — The caravan — The rendezvous — The express — The cache — "Fall" and "spring" hunts.

ST. LOUIS, the principal mart and outfitting point for the fur trade, was from one to two thousand miles distant from the best hunting grounds. The matter of transportation to and from regions so remote was, it will readily be understood, one of very great importance. All that portion of the traffic, by far the larger part of the whole, which was confined to the immediate valley of the Missouri, was carried in river craft, mostly in steamboats or keelboats. In downstream navigation use was made of mackinaws, bull-boats or canoes, which were borne along by the current with but slight assistance from the oars. The interior expeditions to the valleys of the Great Salt Lake and Green river were at first conducted by pack trains, but later largely with wagons. The later Santa Fe trade was carried on principally with wagons.

THE KEELBOAT.

The early commerce of the Missouri was always romantic and interesting and not infrequently full of peril.[1] The keelboat, the historic predecessor of the steamboat, was extensively used down to 1830, and did not disappear from the river for several years thereafter. It was a boat of no mean dimensions, averaging from sixty to seventy-five feet long, fifteen to eighteen feet beam, and three to four feet depth of hold. It was built on a regular model, with a keel running from bow to stern, whence its name. Rising from the deck some four or five feet was the cargo box, cut off at each end about twelve feet shorter than the boat. This part of the boat, as the name implies, was generally used for freight, but was occasionally fitted up with staterooms when used for passengers only. The boat was built on thorough principles of ship craft, and was a strong, substantial vessel.

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[1] For a description of the Missouri river and its tributaries, and a consideration of the origin and application of the name "Missouri," see Part V., Chapter III.

The means of propulsion were various, and were intended to utilize all the forces which man and nature rendered available. The cordelle was the main reliance — a long line attached to the top of a high mast, which stood a little forward of the center of the boat. It passed through a ring, which was fastened by a short line to the bow to help guide the boat, and was drawn by from twenty to forty men strung along the shore. The reason for attaching it to the mast was that it might swing clear of the brush on the bank.

It often happened at river crossings and elsewhere that the cordelle could not be used, and in such cases poles had to be resorted to. These were of various lengths suited to convenient handling, and were equipped with balls or knobs at the upper ends to rest in the hollow of the shoulder. To propel the boat by means of these poles the voyageurs were ranged in single file on each side of the deck near the bow, facing aft. Planting their poles on the river bottom, pointing down stream, they pushed steadily against them, at the same time walking towards the stern along the *passe avant*, a narrow walk some fifteen inches wide on each side of the cargo box, while the boat, yielding to their pressure, moved ahead.

It now and then happened that deep water was found in places where neither pole nor cordelle could be used. Oars were then resorted to, of which there were five or six on each side of the bow.

A very important aid, strange as it may seem, considering the character of a stream like the Missouri, was the sail. It was at times of great assistance, and even sufficient of itself to propel the boat against the current.

Thus by one means or another, and now and then by all together, the early keelboat worked and worried its way up the turbulent current of the Missouri. The best known record for a long journey, say a thousand miles, was eighteen miles per day, while the average was scarcely more than twelve or fifteen. There are several records where keelboats were extensively used for transporting troops, and one in which propeller wheels were provided to be manipulated through hand power by the soldiers. Whatever the method of propulsion, however, the task was always extremely laborious, and the large force and attendant expense required were one of the great arguments for trying the experiment, then considered a very doubtful one on the Missouri, of introducing the steamboat.

THE CANOE.

The wooden canoe, dug out from the trunk of the cottonwood, and hence often called a "dugout," was a very useful craft. Many a journey was made in these crude boats, from the heart of the wilderness two thousand miles away to St. Louis. They were extensively used for local traffic in the neighborhood of the posts.

THE MACKINAW.

The mackinaw was a flat-bottomed boat pointed at both ends, sometimes forty to fifty feet long with twelve feet beam, and three to four feet depth of hold. The oarsmen, four in number, were bestowed in the bow, and the steersman on a high perch in the stern, while the cargo was piled up in the space between them. The current was the main reliance for propulsion. The cargo was about fifteen tons, the rate of progress seventy-five to one hundred miles per day, and the cost about two dollars per day, or about one and a half mills per mile-ton. The boats were cheaply made, and were intended only for downstream navigation, being abandoned at St. Louis. They were the cheapest of all methods for carrying freight down the river.

THE BULL-BOAT.

The bull-boat was made of buffalo skins sewn together and stretched over a frame of willow and cottonwood poles. The size was commonly about twelve by thirty feet and twenty inches deep. It had the least draught of any river craft, and was therefore best adapted to such shallow streams as the Platte. The cargo generally consisted of robes, and amounted to two and a half tons weight, which caused a draught of only about four inches. These boats, in one form or another, saw extensive service on Western rivers.

THE STEAMBOAT.

It has seldom happened in history that the introduction of labor-saving devices has not robbed society to some extent of what was poetic and sentimental, and replaced it by something more prosaic and matter of fact. The Missouri river steamboat was an exception, for with all the romance that attached to the old keelboat, its own history was more romantic still. The sight of one of these noble vessels, standing high above the water line and well above the highest banks, its white form sharply outlined against the foliage of the bottoms, its lofty chimneys pouring out clouds of smoke, its apparent ease in stemming the swift current, and finally, its strange and supernatural appearance to the rude inhabitants of the prairies, gave it a character distinctly its own. It was found to accomplish a great saving over the cost of the keelboat, and it consequently came rapidly into use, at first in the fur trade, and later in every kind of business, public or private, that was transacted along the river. No feature of frontier life is more intimately blended with the history of the Western country than the Missouri river steamboat.

It was an attractive looking craft. Unlike the ocean vessel, which is in large part below the water line, the river boat drew only three or four feet, and was therefore almost entirely above the surface, giving it an apparent size relatively much greater than that of the ocean vessel. The boats were flat bottomed, and were formerly propelled with side wheels, but later with one wheel in the stern. The freight storage was in the hold, but everything else — boilers, engine, cabins and all — was above the main deck. Suitable appliances were placed on the forecastle for handling freight, while powerful capstans, lines and spars were provided to help over the shallow places.

The handling of these boats was a science in itself, and the Missouri river pilot had a more difficult rôle to fill than ever fell to a navigator on the high seas. Not even the perils of Mississippi river navigation, now permanently fixed in literature through the genius of Mark Twain, were to be compared with those of its great western tributary.

The annual voyages of the steamboats were great events, both at St. Louis and the various posts. The boat carried the necessary outfit for a year's trade, and generally also a hundred or more people for service in the Indian country. Besides the regular crew of the boats, there were engagés to recruit the force in the field or to replace those whose terms were about to expire. There were generally a partner and one or more clerks returning from a visit to St. Louis. More than likely there were several missionaries aboard, while the cabin lists frequently included gentlemen of science or leisure, who made the trip in the interests of their researches, or on account of their love of adventure. Finally there were never lacking the copper countenances of the native inhabitants, who were always sending deputations to St. Louis for one purpose or another. The crew and passengers made up a motley assemblage, the like of which, for picturesque variety, was probably never beheld except in a Missouri river steamboat.

Without following the long monotonous career of the boat, through the innumerable difficulties of its long journey, it will here suffice to note the beginning and end of the voyage. The departure of the boat from St. Louis was naturally an event of much importance. Those who were going to service in the wilderness would be absent several years, while even those who were to return had perils enough before them to make their absence a matter of anxiety to friends. With most of the common passengers, and particularly with the engagés, the parting was anything but a scene of sorrow. The previous days and nights were given over to general carousal and dissipation, with the result that when the hour of sailing arrived, a goodly number were unable to walk aboard the boat, and were either carried on or left altogether. It occasionally happened that those so left would recover in time to hie across the country to St. Charles before the steamboat passed that point.

As the boat pulled out into the stream, those on board opened a running salute of musketry, accompanied by such other accessories as were at hand, and the uproar continued until the boat was practically out of hearing. The exuberant spirits of the crew then settled down to the serious task of reducing things to order. This was a most important proceeding, for ordinarily on leaving port the deck of the boat presented a scene of inextricable confusion, with packages of all descriptions strewn about and passengers not yet assigned to their quarters. The engagés were first given their allowance of blankets and other equipments, and then work was begun at storing away the cargo. Order began gradually to rise from the general chaos, and before nightfall the vessel had taken on the appearance which it would continue to wear during the rest of the trip.

Thus the long voyage through the prairies was begun. Week after week passed as the boat toiled up the river, stopping at the various posts, until finally the scene shifted to the most remote establishment which it was expected to visit. The dreary routine of the trader's life suddenly changed to unwonted activity. The long-looked-for annual boat was in sight — the great event of the year — with news from the outside world, and all the business matters that made up the purpose of the journey. The fort manned its guns — for it had several small cannon mounted in the bastions — and a hearty salute of welcome was fired. The boat vigorously responded. Everybody about the fort crowded to the scene — the bourgeois for whom a respectful space was made in the crowd, and the clerks, artisans, storekeepers, groups of free trappers, and bands of Indians, forming in all as wild and motley a crowd as boat ever met in port.

Immediately upon landing, and even before the interchange of salutations was complete, the unloading of the cargo was begun. No time was to be lost in navigating the Missouri. Should the spring rise go down before the return of the boat, she would have to stay up all the year, as happened with the steamer *Assiniboine* in 1834-35. Night and day the roustabouts of the boat and the engagés of the fort were busy carrying off the goods and carrying on the furs. A banquet on the boat and another with the bourgeois completed the festivities, and almost before the denizens of the fort had taken their eyes from the strange visitor, she had hauled in her lines and was speeding back to St. Louis. The crowd of passengers was not so large as on the ascending voyage, although there was still a goodly list, comprised mostly of those whose terms of service had expired, of partners in the business, whom the affairs of the concern called to St. Louis, and of the travelers who went up for the trip.

THE CARAVAN.

The caravans[2] which followed the land route to the mountains or to Santa Fe were, of course, a very different sort of organization from the steamboat and its crew — as different as was the rendezvous at their destination from the trading post on the river. They generally made their starting point at Independence, Mo. In the earlier years pack trains were exclusively used; later wagons were resorted to for a part of the distance. Mules were used as pack animals, and experts in the art of packing disposed the unwieldy cargoes with marvelous skill upon the unwilling beasts. The caravans moved fifteen to twenty-five miles per day, and camped at the end of each day's journey wherever good grass, wood, and water were to be found. Great caution was always taken to guard against Indian attacks.

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[2] This term was not often used with reference to the Rocky Mountain expeditions, although entirely applicable to them. Its more common occurrence was in the Santa Fe trade. The British companies called their supply parties from the east *brigades*, a term which was occasionally used in the earlier years of the American trade, but which quickly fell into disuse.

THE RENDEZVOUS.

After about a month's wanderings, the caravan arrived at the annual rendezvous in some valley, where it had been arranged the previous year that the mountain parties should meet at a particular date. Hither from all directions came the roving population of the surrounding country. First there were the bands of trappers who were in the regular employ of the companies, and who had passed a long and lonesome winter among the mountains. Then there were the freemen, who gathered with the rest to dispose of the fruits of their labors. To the same spot came numerous bands of Indians also with furs or horses to sell.

As soon as everyone expected had arrived, the business began. The parties belonging to the company turned over their furs, and received their wages and a new equipment. The free trappers and the Indians trafficked their furs on the best attainable terms, and purchased their equipments for the ensuing year. While all this business was going on, and while the cargoes were being made ready for the homeward journey, the heterogeneous assemblage went in for a good time. The flat alcohol kegs were broached, liquor flowed like water, and the wildest tumult at length ensued, ending not infrequently with fatal results. The debauch extended likewise to the Indians, many of whom were presently reduced to a state of the most abhorrent and revolting intoxication. Gambling was actively rushed during the whole time, and few were the trappers who did not pay a heavy tribute upon the altar of chance. In fact, with gaming, treating, and feasting, most of the hard earnings of a year's toil found their way directly back into the pockets of the company at the enormous profit which their prices secured. The caravan then returned to the States, and the sore-headed trappers, after recovering from their dissipation, betook themselves with heavy hearts but light pockets to their lonely retreats in the mountains, there to pass another three hundred and sixty days in peril and toil, that they might spend five in drunken frolic.

The mountain rendezvous was a remarkable gathering, entirely unique in American history. Few finer subjects for a great painting could be found than one of these assemblages as they used to take place in the upper valley of the Green river under the Wind river mountains, or in Pierre's Hole under the Three Tetons. The rendezvous, as it was in its best days, was a very transient institution, continuing at most for only about a decade. But its brief career was full of thrilling incidents.

PACKS.

In transporting the furs to market, they were disposed in packs weighing about one hundred pounds.[3] They were very securely packed and so wrapped as to protect them from the weather. It was a costly and perilous undertaking to move the heavy cargoes that were obtained at these rendezvous on their long journey to St. Louis, and it is said that General Ashley once offered a dollar a pound to any one who would insure him against loss during the transportation.

A common unit of price in the earlier years of the trade was a first-class beaver skin, worth in the neighborhood of six dollars. It was called a *plus,* and was much used at that time.

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[3] A pack of furs contained ten buffalo robes, fourteen bear, sixty otter, eighty beaver, eighty raccoon, one hundred and twenty foxes, or six hundred muskrat skins.

THE EXPRESS.

Along the Missouri valley communication by express was had at intervals throughout the year with St. Louis. Such was the case occasionally from the mountains. The express down the valley was generally by canoe, except in winter, when dog trains were used above Council Bluffs, and saddle horses below. The upbound express was always overland above Council Bluffs. The express was an important matter. It gave the officials at St. Louis news from their remote establishments, brought down the requisitions from the various posts for the next year's supplies, and reported the state of the winter, the approximate depth of snow in the mountains, and the probable time of its melting, whereby the company was able to plan its annual voyage with at least a shadow of relation to the condition of high water in the river. The express from St. Louis likewise contained the important correspondence relative to the business.

THE CACHE.

Of the many terms peculiar to the fur trade no one was of more common use than the word *cache*. It frequently happened that parties had to abandon temporarily the property they were carrying, with the intention of returning for it at a more convenient time. The property so abandoned was cached or concealed so as to prevent its loss or injury. The use of the word in this specific meaning is very old and of course came through the French to whose language it belongs. The cache, as ordinarily prepared, consisted of a deep pit in the ground in the construction of which the point of paramount importance was to avoid any trace of the work which might attract attention after it was completed. The size of the pit depended upon the quantity it was to hold, and sometimes it was very spacious and contained wagons and other bulky material. The best site was in a dry soil, easily excavated and in a situation that afforded good facilities for concealment. The pit was lined with sticks and dry leaves after which the goods were carefully disposed therein, and all perishable articles, such as provisions or fur, were protected with the utmost care. This was a vital matter for it frequently happened that valuable articles were found spoiled.

The greatest difficulty in the preparation of a cache was its concealment after completion. From the sharp eyes of the sons of the prairies no trace however minute would escape. They might be peering over some neighboring precipice as were the Crows when the returning Astorians were making a cache on the shores of Snake river in 1812. The concealment consisted simply in removing all evidence of the cache — never by any sort of covering. The point was to leave the ground looking just as it did before. If in turf, the sod was scrupulously replaced. In other places it was usual to build a camp fire over the cache and thus not only obliterate all evidence of the work but divert attention as well.

With all this care caches were often discovered and "raised" or "lifted" by those who had no right to them. Wolves often dug them out and their work would discover them to the Indians. The trappers themselves, as a general thing, respected the caches of rival parties.

Caches were occasionally made in the sides of vertical cliffs. Such a bank in the Wind River valley once caved in while work was going on and killed two men. They were also made in the trunks of trees, in clefts of rocks and other places, but nearly always in the ground.

These caches sometimes attained notoriety and have left their names in various localities. Cache valley, Utah, is an example, as were the "caches" on the Arkansas river. There are also numerous "Cache creeks" scattered throughout the West.

THE SPRING AND FALL HUNTS.

Few terms are more familiar in the nomenclature of the fur trade than *spring* and *fall hunts*. Most of the beaver fur was taken in these two seasons. In the summer the fur was not in good condition, and the trapper improved this period of enforced inactivity to visit the annual rendezvous or some trading post, to settle his accounts for the year, to secure a new equipment, and to return to the theater of his approaching fall hunt. In the winter the climate was too severe for work, the peril of travel was extreme, the streams were frozen over, and the beaver was hibernating in his lodge. The trapper again made a virtue of necessity, selected some safe and sheltered retreat, and whiled away the long and lonely winters as best he could.

The severity of the winter seemed to add quality to the fur, and skins taken in the spring hunts were better than those taken in the fall.

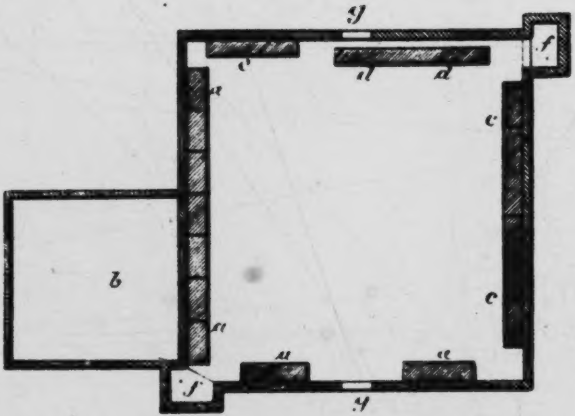
CHAPTER VI.

TRADING POSTS.

Great number of trading posts — Description of a typical trading post — Defensive features — Interior arrangements — The chantier — Smaller posts — Life at the trading posts — Arrival of the annual convoy — Journals of the posts — Geographical distribution.

TO one who has never given the subject especial attention, the large number of establishments, dignified with the name of *forts, posts,* or *houses,* that existed in the heart of the wilderness long before the tide of western emigration had set in, would seem almost incredible. In 1843 there were in existence in the country tributary to St. Louis no fewer than one hundred and fifty occupied or abandoned posts. The names of more than one hundred have been recovered while the casual hints thrown out in the narratives and correspondence of the times make certain the existence of a much larger number. Some of these were really great establishments and lasted many years; others were very temporary affairs, being occupied only for a season or two. Abandoned sites were frequently reoccupied, often by different companies who christened them with new names.

By far the greater number of these posts lay along the Missouri river, and a glance at our map will show a crowding of names which even modern settlement scarcely equals. Most of the names have long been buried in oblivion, and are here resurrected as from the tomb of history. Many are permanently lost, while others can not be cleared of uncertainty as to their true location and ownership. Many of the names are perpetuated in towns and villages which have grown up on or near the old sites. Others, that should



GROUND PLAN OF A TYPICAL TRADING POST

(*Fort Pierre*)

From a drawing by Maximilian

ff. Two-story block-houses. Upper story adapted for use of small arms; lower story for cannon.

gg. Front and back of quadrangle 114 paces in length; other sides 108 paces; inner area 87 by 87 paces.

dd. One-story residence of bourgeois of post.

e. Office and residence of clerk.

aaaa. Residence of other clerks, interpreter, engagés, and their families.

cc. Stores.

gg. Entrance doors to fort.

b. Garden.

have survived on account of their great importance, have passed entirely out of use.

These establishments were generally designated as "Forts." Their primary purpose was trade, but in a land of savage and treacherous inhabitants they served the purpose of protection as well. Their construction was therefore adapted to both ends. The ground plan of the typical trading post was always a rectangle, sometimes square, but generally a little longer in one direction than the other. The sides varied in length from one to four hundred feet depending upon the magnitude of the trade which the post must accommodate. In order to ensure the necessary protection the fort was enclosed with strong walls of wood or adobe. There were a few posts built of adobe, but these were the exception. The typical fort was protected by wooden palisades or pickets varying from twelve to eighteen feet high and from four to eight inches thick. In some instances the pickets were squared and set in juxtaposition; in others they were half round pieces formed by sawing logs in halves. They were set from two to three feet in the ground and the earth was generally banked up to a small height against them. In some forts there were musketry loopholes along the top of this embankment. For the purposes of guard duty and also for active defense a plank walk was bracketed to the inside of the pickets about four feet below the top so that sentinels could walk there and observe the ground outside. In case of attack the defenders could mount this walk and fire over the palisades or through the loopholes provided for the purpose.

The main reliance for defense consisted of two bastions, or blockhouses, as they were commonly called, placed at diagonally opposite corners of the fort. They were square in plan, fifteen to eighteen feet on a side, with two stories, and were generally covered with a roof. The lower floor was a few feet above the level of the ground and was loopholed for the small cannon which all the more important posts possessed. Above the artillery floor was another for the musketry defense with about three loopholes on each exposed face. The blockhouse stood entirely outside the main enclosure, its inner corner joining the corner of the fort so that it flanked two sides; that is, the defenders in each bastion could fire along the outer face of two sides of the fort and thus prevent any attempt to scale or demolish the walls.

A "fort" thus constructed was really very strong and was practically impregnable to an enemy without artillery. A host of savages armed with bows and arrows or with the indifferent firearms of those days could make no impression upon it, and the garrison could look with indifference upon any attack, however formidable, so long as they used reasonable precaution and were supplied with provisions and ammunition. There is no record of a successful siege of a stockaded fort in the entire history of the fur trade west of the Mississippi.

The necessary prerequisite of defense having been satisfied, the other arrangements of the fort related to the purposes of trade. The entrance was through a strong and heavy door provided with a wicket through which the doorkeeper could examine a person applying for admittance. In the more elaborate posts there was a double door, with a room and a trading counter between them. The Indians were admitted only to this space for purposes of trade. In the single-door posts trading was sometimes conducted through the wicket when there was suspicion of danger.

On the opposite side of the enclosure from the entrance stood the house of the bourgeois, usually the most pretentious building in the post. Nearby stood the office and the house of the clerks. Along one side of the quadrangle stood the barracks of the engagés while across the square were the store houses for the merchandise, provisions, furs, and peltries. There were also buildings for shops, of which the blacksmith shop was most important. A fur press was a necessary part of the establishment. The buildings usually stood with their back walls on the line of the enclosure and for the distance covered by them they sometimes replaced the pickets. In the center of the enclosure was a large square or court in which ordinarily stood a piece of artillery trained upon the entrance, and a flag staff from which the ensign of the republic daily floated to the prairie breeze.

Close to the fort, and itself protected by a strong enclosure, with a communication through the walls of the fort, there was often to be found a small field in which common vegetables were raised for the garrison. Then there was always some protection for the horses which were the great object of the Indian forays. Sometimes the corral was outside and close to the fort; but in many cases the stock was brought within the walls. On the plains around the post there was scarcely ever absent the characteristic tent of the Indian, and at certain seasons they were scattered by hundreds in every direction.

Near most of the larger river posts there was some spot selected where timber was abundant at which the pickets and lumber for the posts were manufactured, the mackinaw boats and the canoes built, and such other work done as the establishment required. These places were called *chantiers,* the French for shipyard, and the name has survived in one or two places, as at Chantier creek in South Dakota and Shonkin creek, which was first called Chantier creek, a little below Fort Benton in Montana. The Fort Pierre chantier was commonly called the Navy Yard and was twenty miles or so above the post.

The description above given applies only to the larger posts. There were besides a great number of smaller posts, which were intended for temporary occupancy only and were accordingly of a much less pretentious character. In many cases the resources of the traders did not permit of anything except the most primitive structures. Generally these posts or houses were simply log buildings, perhaps two or three huddled together, but often only one. They were scattered all over the West and the names and localities of most of them have been forgotten.

In the upper Missouri country the smaller posts were not independent establishments but were connected with some larger post from which they received supplies, equipment, and men and to which they sent the produce of their trade. Union and Pierre are the most prominent examples of the larger posts, to each of which there were connected a number of smaller establishments.

Life at these trading posts, buried as they were in the depths of the wilderness, a thousand miles, often, from civilization, could not but be dull, uninteresting, and lonely, for the greater part of the year. Few indeed were the diversions that came to enliven the humdrum life of the garrison, yet occasionally there were excitement and hilarity to spare. For the most part the steady routine of work kept up day by day — receiving and dismissing bands of Indians who came in to trade, watching the country for signs of buffalo and when they came sending parties out to hunt them, preparing and dispatching the winter express to St. Louis, cutting wood for the annual steamboat at such posts as were on the river, keeping the account books, journals, and correspondence of the posts, receiving returns from subordinate houses, and baling and pressing furs for St. Louis. Once or twice a year bundles of newspapers arrived from the outer world and these were read and re-read until worn out by the handling. Occasionally distinguished visitors passed weeks or months at the post, thus adding a new and interesting element to its life. Hunting was the one great amusement and in this the buffalo chase stood supreme. There was of course a variety of games and the Fort Pierre journal occasionally mentions them in its records. The arrival of bands of free trappers was always signalized by a season of debauch in which the astute trader got not only all the furs, but generally all the money he had paid for them. As there were competing establishments at most of the important situations a degree of social intercourse was kept up between them. There were " calls " and " dinners " back and forth, for the exigencies of competition were never permitted to interfere with those amenities which are naturally observed between man and man.

The most notable event in the life of the trading post was the arrival of the annual convoy from the States, whether the steamboat or keelboat on the Missouri, the brigade in the mountains, or the caravan on the plains. This was the time when the business of the past year was closed up and a new year begun. Engagés whose terms of service had expired might now return home while others came to take their places. The convoy brought merchandise for the next year's trade, packages and letters from friends, and papers from the outside world. It took back the cargoes of furs and peltries gathered during the year and such of the force whose terms of service had expired and who did not wish to remain longer. The arrival of the Missouri steamboat in particular was an event looked forward to with the most eager interest. When the time had come to expect it Indian runners were dispatched down the river a hundred miles or so to bring the first news of her approach. Then the bourgeois and his clerk would sometimes set out in a canoe and meet the boat on her way. When the lofty smoke stacks burst into sight from behind the last bluff which excluded her from view, the fort let go, in joyful salute, such artillery as it possessed, while the whole population — traders, engagés, and Indians — went down to the bank to bid welcome to the visitor.

At the more important posts a daily journal of events was regularly kept. Fragments of those at Forts Pierre, Clark, and Union have been preserved and give us an inside view of the kind of life that was led there.[1]

In the matter of geographical distribution the controlling factor in the location of the posts was the convenience of the Indians. Not infrequently the tribes arbitrarily designated the spots where the posts should be built. The geography of the country exercised an important influence on the commercial value of any situation. The post at the mouth of the Yellowstone, for example, commanded the commerce of two great rivers and became a most important establishment. So throughout the West in all those situations like the mouth of the Yellowstone, the mouth of the Laramie, the heart of the Blackfoot, Sioux, and Mandan countries, the headwaters of the Arkansas and South Platte, where the advantages for trade were greatest, the trading post arose. In general there were two or three such posts belonging to different companies.

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[1] See Appendix F.

CHAPTER VII.

THE TRAPPING FRATERNITY.

The Bourgeois or Partisan — The hunter and trapper — Camp keepers — Free trappers — The voyageur — The American hunter — Artisans — *Mangeurs de lard* — Habits of thrift — Physiognomy — Dress — Shelter — Wages — Desertion — Language — Lack of interest in geology, etc.

UNDER this title will be considered the wandering population of the Western country who entered it upon its discovery for purposes of trade and adventure, and who for many years were the sole representatives of white occupancy. Their life was peculiar and forms a distinct and unique phase in the growth of American communities. It was the first phase of this growth, for it was the trader, the trapper, and the hunter who paved the way for the settlement and development that were to follow.

It would scarcely be possible to propose any distinct type as characteristic of the trapping fraternity. In the first place there were three separate nationalities, American, French and Spanish, who carried into the life of the West their peculiar national traits quite independently of the particular work in which they were engaged. Then there was a wide variety of occupation in the business of the fur trade and the individual who filled one rôle might be a very different sort of man from him who filled another. It is therefore necessary to consider the various features of this early business in order to understand what manner of man was particularly suited to each.

THE BOURGEOIS AND THE PARTISAN.

By these terms were usually designated those who had charge of the trading posts and field expeditions of the various companies. The bourgeois was the manager of the trading post, while the partisan was the leader of the expedition, for it will be borne in mind that there were two distinct methods of conducting the fur business, one at permanent posts and the other at temporary rendezvous. The bourgeois had absolute authority at his post, and conducted his business with an almost military discipline. He usually dined either alone or with a few only of the leading subordinates. The distinction of rank was strictly drawn and the common *mangeur de lard* would no sooner presume unbidden to hold social intercourse with his bourgeois than would a soldier with his regimental commander. In some of the posts in the early days the bourgeois wore a kind of uniform. This was particularly true of that considerable leaven which came into the American fur trade through the Columbia Fur Company. McKenzie at Fort Union wore uniform and so for a time did Laidlaw at Pierre.

The bourgeois was nearly always a partner in the company. He was director in chief of all the business at the particular post of which he was in charge and controlled the policy of trade with the Indians who belonged geographically to it. He organized parties of trappers to work up particular streams, and sent individual traders to such tribes as he thought necessary. He employed hunters to keep the post supplied with fresh meat and he directed to what extent gardening should be carried on, or other means be adopted to provide subsistence at his own and the outlying posts. He selected certain subordinates to conduct the trade with visiting Indians, others to care for and pack the furs for shipment, while he attended to the correspondence with the company at St. Louis or with his lieutenants at detached stations.

His duties were of the most comprehensive nature and it required a man of great administrative ability to manage them. And so we find that the bourgeois at such posts as Pierre and Union or Bent's Fort on the Arkansas were men of a high order of ability. Kenneth McKenzie, William Laidlaw, Alexander Culbertson, William Bent, and others were fit men to command armies, manage great railroads, or fill any high calling to which the fortune of life might have led them. No commander of a military post on the frontier ever carried a greater responsibility than did these important bourgeois, whose authority covered a vast stretch of territory where the rule of law did not reach and where they had to deal continually with restless adventurers and savage men.

What was true of the bourgeois of the great posts was equally true of the partisan or leader of the itinerant expeditions. The nature of their business was somewhat different, but the qualities of success were the same and one may find the counterparts of the McKenzies and Culbertsons of the trading posts in the Ashleys, Smiths, and Sublettes of the mountains.

CLERK.

Next in importance to the bourgeois was the clerk, whose duties placed him first in line of promotion. He was entitled to the same social rank as the bourgeois, and in the latter's absence succeeded to his duties. He was frequently in command of posts, and his work on the whole was the most exacting of any that pertained to the trade. He was often required to take an outfit of merchandise and proceed to some Indian village, there to reside in the lodge of a chief until the trade of the band had been exhausted.

There were usually several clerks at the more important posts. The most trusted of them were frequently stockholders or partners in the companies for which they were working, but ordinarily they were only salaried employes.

THE HUNTER AND TRAPPER.[1]

The hunters and trappers can hardly be said to have constituted a distinct class, for they were men who could turn their hand to almost any work that fell in their way. There were, indeed, in every expedition skilled hunters whose duty it was to beat up the country along the route and provide meat for the party, and there were also men who followed the streams exclusively and spent their lives trapping beaver; but in general the hunter was a versatile genius who adapted himself to whatever duty presented itself.

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[1] The term "mountaineer" was extensively used in describing the personnel of the mountain expeditions.

When it was desired to work up a section of country by trapping its streams, it was the usual practice for the larger parties to break up into small groups, each group taking a particular stream or locality. In this way lone bands would penetrate to the most obscure and inaccessible retreats of the mountains and remain perhaps weeks or months without seeing another individual than their own party. It was not often, however, that the resources of a stream took long to exhaust them and the parties usually reappeared after a few days, ready to take up another stream or join the main party in a move to a different locality. Frequently the danger from the Indians forbade separation into small groups and the whole party had to keep together.

The life of these lonely hermits of the mountains, like the solitary sheepherder of today, seems unendurable to one who is fond of social intercourse, or at least of seeing now and then some one or more of his fellowmen. The habit of seclusion, however, seemed to grow upon the individual and he came to love the life in spite of its solitude, its hardships, and its privations.

CAMP KEEPERS.

Under this designation it is intended to include only those individuals in the trapping expeditions to the mountains whose duty it was to remain in camp and care for the furs which their companions might collect. They skinned the beaver and other animals; cleaned, dressed, and dried the skins, and did whatever other work was required to protect and preserve the fruits of the chase. They also cared for the stock and attended to other duties of the camp. There was usually one of these camp keepers to about two trappers.

FREE TRAPPERS.

A characteristic class engaged in the fur trade was that of the free hunters or trappers. As the name implies, these people were not bound to service with any company. They had their own individual organization and went when and where they chose. Sometimes there were a number of free trappers together, each independent of the other, capturing and selling his own peltries, but keeping with the rest for self-protection. In other instances the free trapper was a sort of partisan and had his own party bound to him in service. The results of the hunt all went to him, under certain arrangements, and he generally took his furs to the nearest trading post for sale, or even went with them himself to St. Louis.

The free trappers, or freemen, as they were commonly called, were the most interesting and enviable class in the mountains. Bound to no company, free to go where they pleased, they were held in higher repute than any other class. Moreover they were men of bold and adventurous spirit for none other would have the courage to follow so hazardous a business. They were liable, however, to have too much of this spirit, or perhaps better, too much of a ruffian spirit. The leader could not always control them and they were prone to all sorts of excesses. Vain of their appearance, extravagantly fond of ornament for both themselves and their steeds, they rivaled the proud Indian himself in the profusion of gewgaws which decked out their attire. They were likewise utterly improvident, fond of gambling, and of all sorts of trials of skill, and it was a general rule that most of the proceeds of their labor were quickly squandered at the first rendezvous or post which they reached.

THE VOYAGEUR.

As is well known, the French Creole, both of Canada and

Louisiana, was a very important figure in the early fur trade. It is probable that at least four-fifths of the lower grades of employes were of this nationality, and as the differences of habit and temperament between them and the American were marked, it will be of advantage to present a brief comparison of the two.

The voyageur had a light and buoyant vein in his nature which was totally wanting in the American. He was always singing at his work, laughing and joking with his companions, and cheerful and happy in his manner. His willingness to toil, his complacent endurance of the most prodigious labors and his long acquiescence in the most scanty provision for food and shelter made him the cheerful slave of the fur trade. It would have been impossible to have extorted similar service from an American. As a general thing his field of work was more upon the water than upon land, although this was not an exclusive rule. It was he who cordelled the keelboat up the long course of the Missouri and performed the arduous labors connected with the navigation of that most stubborn stream. The canoe or other craft, and not the horse, was therefore his mode of conveyance; the water was his natural element, and the river valleys, rather than the mountains and the plains, were his home.

As a rule the voyageurs were wholly illiterate and very few of them were able to sign their contracts of service. They were not a brave people, and their fears when upon dangerous ground were often ludicrous in the extreme. They were all devout Catholics.

The voyageur was beyond comparison the most interesting and picturesque personality in the trapping fraternity — mild in disposition, mercurial in temper, obedient, willing, and contented, ever ready to undergo the most severe hardship, and altogether a most useful and indispensable character in the business of the fur trader.

The American hunter, on the other hand, lacked the vivacity and happy temperament of the Frenchman. He was less subservient and compliant under authority. He was more of a "deserter," more independent, talked and sang less, and in outward appearance was a less amiable and agreeable character to get along with. But in dangerous emergencies, in long and arduous undertakings, and in sterling qualities in battle he was far and away above his Gallic brother. If, in service on the rivers, Mr. Astor's estimate was true that one Canadian voyageur was worth three Americans, it was equally true that in the rough life of the wilderness one American hunter was worth three Canadians. Each filled a place which the other could not, and all comparisons should take this fact into consideration lest injustice be done on either side.[2]

ARTISANS, ETC.

There were always at the larger posts various grades of

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[1] The common verdict of the traders, as well as of travelers, is that the voyageur was very deficient in physical courage. Ashley complained that they utterly failed him at the time of the Aricara fight in 1823. Maximilian, Prince of Wied, records that when passing some dangerous ground, "my Canadians were so timid that they did not venture to speak aloud." They were always terror-stricken in the presence of Indians whose friendship was doubtful.

The Canadian boat songs were a characteristic feature of the voyageur's life. They were usually simple ditties and were a great relief in times of difficult work, when they cheered up the weary company as martial music does the tired soldier. It is to be regretted that more of these songs have not been preserved. The following stanzas illustrate their general quality:

"Dans mon chemin j'ai rencontré
Trois cavalières bien montées,
L'on, ton, laridon danée
L'on, ton, laridon, dai.

"Trois cavalières bien montées,
L'une à cheval, l'autre à pied.
L'on, ton, etc."

The Canadians, despite the scantiness of their allowance of food, were great eaters when they could get what they wanted, and it was a common saw in the fur business that two Canadians would devour offhand the whole side of a buffalo.

artisans such as blacksmiths, carpenters, and boat builders, who were qualified for any special work which the exigencies of the service might require. With the overland expeditions there were of course the necessary packers, teamsters, and camp followers to do the work of the camp and the march.

MANGEURS DE LARD.

To perform the common labor of the fur trade there were annually imported from Canada numbers of raw recruits who were wholly without experience in the business. They were bound for a period of five years under the most rigorous engagement, and at wages that made it impossible for them to arrive at the end of their term without being in their employers' debt. As there was no way for them to get passage out of the country while so in debt, they were compelled to remain and keep at work or resort to the dangerous expedient of desertion. En route from Canada to their places of work they were fed on pork, hard bread, and pea soup, but principally on pork, from which circumstance they were called *mangeurs de lard,* or pork eaters, by the more experienced voyageurs. From this association the term came to be used in ridicule to denote a greenhorn, tenderfoot, or generally an individual of no experience.[3]

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE TRAPPING FRATERNITY.

Habits of thrift among the trappers were practically unknown. They were improvident, largely by choice. They spurned the idea of frugality or economy in regard to their earnings, and were therefore always poor. Zenas Leonard, who passed three years with them, and whose experiences will be related in another part of this work, said: " Scarcely one man in ten of those employed in this country ever thinks of saving a single dollar of his earnings, but all spend it as fast as they can find an object to spend it for. They care not what may come to pass tomorrow, but think only of enjoying the present moment." Nathaniel J. Wyeth said of his own party: " Almost all the men take up [their wages] as fast as they earn — and would faster, if I would let them — in goods at about five hundred per cent on original cost." It was a sort of mountain pride, a convention of the business, to squander wages as fast as earned.

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[3] Pierre Chouteau, Jr., in one of his letters characterizes an employe who had made a false step as "*a raw hand,* a new beginner, or in common parlance, a *mangeur de lard.*" Father De Smet says that the term was applied by way of pleasantry to anyone who was making his first appearance in the country.

Those who had passed several winters in the Indian country and had gained some experience were often called *hivernans* or *winterers.* The common hired hands engaged at St. Louis were generally termed engagés.

The nature of service in the wilderness produced its effect in the physiognomy, language, habits, and dress of the hunter. The hard life which he was compelled to follow left a deep impression upon his physical appearance. He was ordinarily gaunt and spare, browned with exposure, his hair long and unkempt, while his general make-up, with the queer dress which he wore, made it often difficult to distinguish him from an Indian. The constant peril of his life and the necessity of unremitting vigilance gave him a kind of piercing look, his head slightly bent forward and his deep eyes peering from under a slouch hat, or whatever head-gear he might possess, as if studying the face of the stranger to learn whether friend or foe. On the whole he impressed one as taciturn and gloomy, and his life did to some extent suppress gaiety and tenderness. He became accustomed to scenes of violence and death and the problem of self-preservation was of such paramount importance that he had but little time to waste upon ineffectual reflections. His conversation with his companions, where interspersed with lighter touches, was still of a dry wit order, not much abounding in hearty laugh or relaxed countenance. Such evidences of affection or love for his fellows as he did display were generally couched in language of an opposite character through which his companion would divine his intended meaning. In spite, however, of his apparently unsocial disposition, he was "generous, even to a fault." So few were his numbers that friendships became deeply rooted. His "possibles" were always at the disposal of his companions, and their word or promise was all the security he wanted.

Partly from inclination and partly from necessity the hunter in his dress adopted the customs of the Indians. The clothes which he brought from the States quickly fell to pieces under the wear and tear of the life in which he was engaged. The Indian costume was the most convenient substitute. There was moreover a manifest pride on the part of the hunter in imitating the garb of his red brethren, and it is doubtful if the fondness of the latter for the incongruous combinations of his own and the white man's clothing was more marked than that of the hunter for the wild attire of the savage. The headdress in summer usually consisted of a light handkerchief, adjusted in the style of a turban so as to be attractive in appearance while serving as a protection against heat and insects. The upper part of the body was clad in a light blue shirt of coarse cotton or other cloth, and in some cases breeches with long deerskin leggings were worn, leaving the thighs and hips bare. "The cloth which was folded around the loins was held in place by the girdle," while a "hunting shirt with a large cape and loose sleeves reached nearly to the knees. . . . It opened in front like a coat and was made so large as to lap at least a foot across the breast. The folds of the bosom served the purpose of a pocket. . . . The moccasin was made of a single piece of heavy dressed buckskin. A plain seam ran from the heel to the ankle, but the upper part, from the toe to the instep, was gathered. The shoe thread was the sinews of deer or of buckskin."

In winter the clothing as just described was materially increased both in quantity and quality. The hunting shirt was made of dressed deerskin. A heavy hooded cloak, called a capote, was thrown over the shoulders. The tops of the moccasins were made with long folds which could be wrapped around the ankles and the interior was lined with wool or deer hair.

All portions of this picturesque attire, whether for summer or winter use, were ornamented with gay embroidery, fringes, bead work, hair, feathers, and other gewgaws. A belt hung over the left shoulder and under the right arm in which the ammunition for his rifle was carried. In leather bags attached to his girdle were his knife and hatchet and materials for mending his moccasins, while his few remaining equipments were bestowed upon other portions of his body.[4]

While wandering about on his hunting expeditions the mountaineer ordinarily had no shelter but the sky and lay down to sleep in the open air. His bed consisted generally of a single buffalo robe, occasionally with leaves or boughs underneath. His saddle often did service as a pillow, while one or two blankets were his sole protection from the cold. In the winter season, or at other times when his business required a considerable sojourn in one place, he erected a rude hut for his better protection in either hot or cold weather. It was located near some stream where both grass and wood were plenty, and was formed of skins spread over an arched frame-work of saplings bent to a semicircle with their extremities inserted in the ground. His fire was built in front, and near by was a pole laden with the various meats which were his main reliance for food. The "graining blocks" and stretching frame, used in cleaning and curing the skins, stood conveniently at hand. The traps hung on some neighboring tree and perhaps a brace of elk antlers did service as a rack on which to hang his articles of clothing when not in use. The various equipments for his horse were carefully bestowed in some convenient place and the steed himself was probably grazing near by or eating the bark of cottonwood trees felled for the purpose.[5]

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[4] This description of the hunter's apparel is mainly borrowed and condensed from an article in the Encyclopedia of St. Louis (1899). It is the most complete that has fallen under the author's notice, and is from the pen of Prof. Sylvester Waterhouse, of Washington University, St. Louis — a most painstaking investigator, the fruit of whose careful researches has enriched the work of more than one writer upon these themes.

The hunter's "possibles" or "fixens," as his equipment and luxuries were called by himself, were very limited, for his manner of life required that he should be as free of impedimenta as possible. His rifle and its appurtenances, his traps, knives, hatchet, a few culinary utensils, his tobacco, and some indispensable articles of food such as coffee, sugar, and salt — these with his bedding and the equipments for his horse constituted the extent of his worldly belongings. He usually had, besides the horse he rode, one or two pack animals to carry his equipments and the furs which he might secure.

The wages paid in the fur trade were very small considering the arduous and dangerous character of the work. Clerks received about five hundred dollars and the engagés about one hundred and fifty dollars a year. With this went a plain subsistence which would instantly be repudiated by a laboring man of today. Often the engagés were required to subsist themselves "*aux aliments du pays,*" that is, to get along with such provisions as they or the hunters could extract from the country. They were required, when not otherwise needed, to hunt game, gather wild fruits, cultivate the gardens and do whatever else was necessary to get provisions. If they ever indulged their appetite for sugar or similar luxuries which could be had only from the com[illegible]y's warehouse, they paid for them at a price which quickly absorbed their hard earnings.

The lower class of employes were generally in the company's debt, and this may account in part for the desertions that were always taking place. These were more frequent among the Americans than among the Creoles, but they were common with both. One can form some idea of the severe service required of these engagés when they were willing, in order to escape from it, to undertake the hazardous experiment of desertion. Often two or three men with a canoe, if on the river, or their horses, if inland, would start for St. Louis, a thousand miles away, through tribes of hostile Indians, always in danger of death or recapture. In spite of the romance of the trapper's life, it had its dark side, a side that would be very dark if placed alongside of the laboring man's condition of today.

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[5] This description of a winter shelter for the hunter is drawn in part from *Rocky Mountain Life* — Sage, p. 348.

The language of the trappers was a strange medley of English, French, and Spanish and as distant from grammatical and literary propriety as it is possible to conceive. As in all situations where men are long associated in the same business and in a measure excluded from contact with the world around them, a peculiar jargon grew up among the trapping fraternity, vigorous, and picturesque, if not choice, in its details, but now entirely extinct. Only in a few old narratives of the times does it still survive with any degree of fidelity.*

Here we may properly consider an historic peculiarity of the trapping fraternity which has more than once attracted attention — their utter lack of interest in the geological formations or mineral deposits of the country over which they roamed so extensively. It is indeed a singular fact that a class of men like the American hunters, who shrank at no toil in their search for wealth, should have been so oblivious to whatever lay beneath the surface of the earth. Considering the fascination which the search for gold has had for adventurers in all ages, it is inexplicable that those hardy spirits should have roamed back and forth for half a century or more over those now famous spots where wealth could be had by stooping to pick it up, and should have remained unconscious of its presence. It seems like a providential interposition that thus concealed the knowledge of the mineral riches of the west until all those controversies over the questions of international boundary were perma-

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*The best of these is *Life in the Far West* by George Frederick Ruxton, London, 1849.

nently settled. For it must be borne in mind that during nearly all of the first half of the present century a large part of the country roamed over by the trapper did not belong to the United States.

CHAPTER VIII.

LIFE IN THE WILDERNESS.

Love of wilderness life — Absence of legal restraint — Business methods — Personal relations.

IT was a common observation by travelers in the Far West during the fur-trading era that those who once entered the wild life of the wilderness clung to it afterward as if by an irresistible fascination. It is not difficult to account for this fact, so far as it is actually true. Most men have an element of aboriginal life in their make-up, perhaps the long suppressed characteristic from the times when their ancestors so lived. The advantages of civilization are all purchased at the expense of freedom; and the more profuse and abundant these advantages the more rigid are the restrictions upon physical liberty. One may not walk except upon paths specially prepared for that purpose; he may not gather fruits where he sees them; he may not recline on the grass, however inviting, nor lounge under trees, however grateful the shade. The native fondness for freedom of movement never ceases to chafe under these restrictions and is always seeking relief by expeditions to the "country" or the mountains. And so in these early times men sought the wilderness life because of its exemptions from the artificial restraints of civilization. Like old Jim Bridger, they found the cañons of the cities (as he called the streets) too contracted for their robust freedom, and they longed for those grander avenues laid out by nature in the boundless region of the West.

The fictitious barriers which society erects between man and man, the power of wealth, the exclusiveness of rank, were mostly absent. All were equal and shared the toil of the day and the rest of night with their fellows. Such conditions are always attractive and particularly so to those whose social and financial condition in civilized communities places them in what may be called the lower class. Moreover, long absence from the frontiers, especially from the larger towns like St. Louis, threw one out of touch with the old life, and it was difficult, if not impossible, to pick up the thread where it was left off. There was a sense of awkwardness on the part of the returned wanderer, a feeling that the old places he used to fill were occupied by some one else, that made him the more ready to get back into the prairies and mountains where conventionalities never stood in his way.

Then there was the love of adventure, so natural to the heart of everyone, that led men to the wilderness and kept them there. The excitement of the chase, the crossing of rivers and mountains, the meeting with savage tribes, all were new and interesting and drew many a youth into a kind of life which he never afterward abandoned.

The Western country was proverbially healthy, and the enforced abstinence from injurious practices kept the body well and the mind clear. If starvation often stared the hunter in the face, the disorders of an over-fed stomach never disturbed his slumbers nor sapped his constitution with disease. Men loved the country for its healthfulness.[1]

There were other and less creditable reasons why the wilderness had an attraction for some. Every expedition had in its ranks not a few who had committed crimes which led them to seek immunity from punishment by getting beyond the pale of the law. Thus an old trapper back in the thirties, who has left us a record of his adventures, refers as follows to the event of his departure for home with some of his companions after an absence of three years: "On parting this time many of the men were at a loss to know what to do. Many were anxious to return to the States, but feared to do so lest the offended law might hold them responsible for misdemeanors committed previous to their embarking in the trapping business. Others could not be persuaded to return at any price, declaring that civilization had no charms for them."[2]

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[1] "Among our partisans in the mountains, sickness and natural deaths are almost unknown." Statement by Smith, Jackson and Sublette about 1830.

Thus from one cause or another it resulted that men who embarked in this wild life formed a liking for it and were apt to return to it even if they abandoned it for a time. This feeling was not confined to any particular class, but prevailed equally among all. The record left by Josiah Gregg, who was always careful and conservative in his statements, is not an unusual one: "It will hardly be a matter of surprise then when I add that this passion for prairie life will be very apt to lead me upon the plains again, to spread my bed with the mustang and the buffalo under the broad canopy of heaven; there to seek to maintain undisturbed my confidence in man by fraternizing with the little prairie dogs and wild colts, and the wilder Indians — the unconquered Sabaeans of the American Deserts." And again he says that "scarcely a day passes without my feeling a pang of regret that I am not now roving upon those western plains. Nor do I find my taste peculiar; for I have hardly known a man, who has ever become familiar with the kind of life which I have led for so many years, that has not relinquished it with regret."

It was not, however, all who felt this way, as one may readily gather from notes of the times and particularly from the prevalence of desertions among the engagés of the American Fur Company. To them, indeed, the blessing of freedom did not fully materialize. They had in a measure jumped out of the frying pan into the fire. They had left the restraints of society for the even greater restraints and arduous toil of one of the most exacting concerns known in commercial history. It was therefore an every-day occurrence for men of this class to seek escape from their obligations and to return to their homes. But on the whole it was true then as it is today, that any one who had become familiar with that wild and rugged country never lost the desire to return there.

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[2] *Adventures of Zenas Leonard*, Clearfield, Pa., 1879, p. 86.

Reference has already been made to the absence of legal restraint as one of the valued privileges pertaining to the business of the trapper, and it is an interesting question to know to what extent, if any, this condition operated to deprive men of the rights to which they are entitled in a civilized state of society. Beyond the military post of Fort Leavenworth civil and criminal jurisdiction extended only in name during the entire period covered by this work. It might be concluded from this that, as the country was literally lawless, or without means of enforcing laws, lawlessness and disorder would be the rule. Such was not the case. If due allowance be made for the fact, brought out in the preceding pages, that a considerable portion of the trapping fraternity were desperate characters, if not actual outlaws, when they entered the fur trade, it will be found that life, liberty, and the rights of property, were as much respected in the depths of the wilderness as within the best regulated of cities.

In the matter of business competition things were undoubtedly done in this remote country which could not have been done where the laws were in full force. The robbery of Fitzpatrick by the Crows, already cited, was an instance. The very year following this event Fitzpatrick refused to stand by an agreement to receive an invoice of goods from Nathaniel J. Wyeth after the latter had purchased and transported them all the way from Boston to the valley of Green river. These were the harsher features which competition in business assumed when it was possible to arrive at one's end by mere brute force.

But in reviewing the dark and shadowy transactions of a period now so deeply buried in the past, it will be well to avoid the natural inclination to compare them more unfavorably than they deserve with the business methods of modern times. As a matter of fact he who examines the motive as well as the deed will find it difficult to say in which period these methods stood upon the higher ground. It is not so certain that the code of the wilderness would not bear favorable comparison with that of the modern business world. Too great distinction is often made between physical and intellectual piracy and plunder. The laws of society strictly prohibit the use of superior physical force in appropriating to one's self the property of others, but they make no protest against, nay, even protect, under legal forms, the exercise of superior business sagacity in depriving an inferior of what rightfully belongs to him. It was indeed a reprehensible act in the American Fur Company secretly to instigate the Crows to rob Fitzpatrick of his furs; but the act was no less justifiable morally, though transgressing the laws of the land more openly, than have been thousands of business transactions in modern times whereby great properties have been wrecked, honest holders deprived of their securities, and financial ruin carried to innocent individuals.

When it comes to the personal relations of individuals to each other the account stands even more in favor of the wilderness. It has been demonstrated over and over again in the history of the West that the existence of laws, and the presence of lawyers to expound and of officers to enforce them, are not indispensable to a just and orderly condition in thinly settled portions of a country. It was the universal testimony of those who were familiar with the life of the trapper, and later with that of the gold-seeker. that crimes of all colors were never so few, nor punishment for such as were committed so just and swift and sure, as in those remote localities where there were neither laws nor lawyers. Men trusted each other. Unless there were circumstances to justify it, the trader or trapper was never known to "lift" the cache of his rival, even though detection and discovery were impossible. They rarely required written evidence of their agreements, for they had implicit faith in the sanctity of an oral promise. When disputes arose the common rule was to resort to the code of the duello in some form or other, and in this way every one knew that he would be called to quick account for his delinquencies. Each man was in a measure a law to himself, but here, more than in civilized life — far more — the precepts of the Golden Rule prevailed, and every man tried to treat his neighbor fairly. Those rude men had a true sense of justice, and if they administered it in a rough fashion there was rarely any complaint that their judgments were wrong. "No court or jury is called to adjudicate upon his disputes and abuses," says Gregg, "save his own conscience; and no powers are invoked to redress them save those with which the God of nature has endowed him." It may be truly said that in this land without laws the personal relations of individuals to each other were as harmonious and just as they are under the most elaborate social organization.

PART II. HISTORICAL.

CHAPTER I.

LOUISIANA.

French colonial schemes in America — Early discoveries by Spain, France and England — Marquette and Joliet — La Salle — Rivalry among colonial powers — The French and Indian War — Loss of American colonies to France — American Revolution — Spain and the United States — The Louisiana Purchase — Downfall of Spanish colonial system — Lewis and Clark expedition — Pike's expedition — Advent of the trader.

THE territory which forms the theater of the events described in the following pages is mostly a part of what was once the Province of Louisiana — that boundless possession of the French government in America upon which were built the imperial hopes of princely dominion beyond the sea. Of the three principal colonizing powers of Europe — Spain, France, and England — the schemes of France in North America were the most daring and comprehensive, and their realization would have made her the foremost power in the New World. Her colonial policy, as it finally took definite form, contemplated the settlement of the valleys of the St. Lawrence and the Mississippi, and their connection by a line of forts passing up each to the height of land between them. With more than half the cultivable soil of North America and the two most important systems of inland navigation in her possession, and with outlets upon the sea in widely separated directions, she would control the future destiny of the continent, confining the British to the narrow Atlantic slope on the east, and the Spanish to the steppes and Cordilleras of the southwest. In other directions, the imagination could set no bounds to this magnificent empire, unless it were the unknown shores of the almost unknown Pacific.

It was indeed an imperial dream, but one destined never to be realized; and in strange contrast with the vastness of her designs, France proved to be the first of the three powers to retire permanently from the continent. The fruit of her labors was to be garnered in distant years by a nation whose very birth was an event still buried in the mists of futurity.

Spain had been the pioneer in the discovery and acquisition of territory in America. Columbus crossed the Atlantic in 1492. The conquest of Mexico was finished in 1521, and St. Augustine was founded in 1565. Following Spain, the French made their first permanent settlement at Port Royal, where now is Annapolis, Nova Scotia, in 1605. Two years later the English founded their first colony at Jamestown, and in the following year the French laid the foundations of Quebec. In 1620 the Pilgrims landed at Plymouth Rock. This was one hundred and twenty-eight years after the discovery of America — so slow were the European powers in following up the consequences of that great achievement. At this time the general line of advance of the three powers had taken definite form, and New France, or Canada, New Spain and Florida, New England, and Virginia, became the respective bases of operations in their struggle for the dominion of America.

Many years elapsed before any new and marked advance from these primary bases was accomplished, although in the immediate vicinity of each there were continuous development and expansion. Not until 1673 did any of the three powers attempt to learn what lay within the vast interior of the continent.[1] The first important movement in that direction came from Canada. The French traders among the Indians had heard the natives tell of a great river farther to the westward which flowed neither north nor west, and which they rightly conjectured must flow into the Gulf of Mexico. Talon, the first intendant of New France, being about to visit his native land, determined to ascertain the truth of this rumor before he went. He dispatched two trusty men, Marquette, a Jesuit priest, and Joliet, a trader, to explore the region in question. On the 16th day of June, 1673, they saw the Mississippi at the mouth of the Wisconsin river. Thence they floated down the great stream, noting its important tributaries, until they arrived in the vicinity of the Arkansas. Having gone far enough to remove all doubt that the river emptied into the Gulf of Mexico, they returned, the priest to his mission on the lakes and the trader to Quebec.

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[1] A qualification of this statement ought to be made in favor of the Spanish under Hernando de Soto. That brilliant and knightly adven-

Next in the valley of the Mississippi, so far as any settled purpose of discovery is concerned, was Robert Cavalier de La Salle, whose heroic work in this new field of adventure has brought to its author imperishable fame. To him must be accredited the great conception of joining the valleys of the St. Lawrence and the Mississippi with a line of settlements and of establishing a colony at the mouth of the latter stream. His far-sighted vision even foresaw the time when this inland empire would extend to the Pacific and draw within its pale the commerce of oriental kingdoms. His work in carrying out this project covered ten years of his life, from 1677 to 1687, during which time he succeeded in traversing and exploring, either in person or through his colleagues, nearly the entire length of the Mississippi river. He built and garrisoned several forts along the route, and on the 7th of April, 1682, at the mouth of the Missis-

turer came upon the banks of the Mississippi near Chickasaw Bluffs, May 26, 1540, and two years later was buried beneath its waters. But his great discovery led to no marked results. Spain did not follow it up with any act of formal possession, and the country remained unclaimed and unknown for over one hundred and thirty years thereafter.

sippi, took formal possession, in the name of the King of France, of the country drained by that stream and its tributaries, and gave it the name of *Louisiana.*

Returning to France, he came back to America by way of the Gulf in 1684, prepared to found a colony at the mouth of the river. The way was lost, however, and the vessels passed on to the distant shores of what is now Texas. There a series of misfortunes overtook the enterprise which finally left La Salle with but a small party and not a ship of the several that came with him. In this distress he resolved to strike across the country to the northeast and reach his posts among the Illinois. After proceeding a considerable distance into the interior he was basely murdered by one of his own party, and a life which the most gigantic obstacles could not dismay, was cut short by the stealthy hand of treachery.

La Salle's attempts to found a colony at the mouth of the Mississippi were not resumed until a decade after his death, probably on account of the wars that were being waged between France and England. But in 1698 a squadron was sent over for this purpose under the direction of Iberville and his brothers, Bienville and Sauvolle, members of a very noted family in the naval history of France, and themselves greatly distinguished in their country's service. Iberville entered the Mississippi in a barge, March 1, 1699, probably the first European craft to enter that stream from the Gulf of Mexico, and on the 1st of May of that year a settlement was made on the Bay of Biloxi. Although it was yet eighteen years before the site of New Orleans was selected, and twenty-two before it was actually occupied by the colonial government, the foundation of the lower Louisiana colony nevertheless dates from the last year of the seventeenth century.

It may be considered as from about this time that the colonies of the new world began to be subjects of zealous rivalry on the part of the mother countries. It is true that before this they had been the scene of strife which originated across the sea. Campaigns had been fought in Canada and in Florida. Pensacola had been lost and won. England had once wrested all of Canada from France. But in general upon the arrival of peace the new world conquests were all restored, the only considerable exception being that of Acadia, which was ceded to England in 1713. The colonies had not yet acquired that importance which gave them much weight in European councils, and it does not appear that the future destiny of America was in any adequate sense appreciated by European statesmen of the time.

But the eighteenth century was not far advanced when it became evident that the ever-expanding colonial frontiers were soon to involve the mother countries in a final struggle for supremacy upon the American continent. With jealous eyes the three great powers watched each other. The daring schemes of France in particular excited great concern on the part of her two rivals, for her position, if maintained, could not but give her a commanding influence on the continent. England's possessions were not contiguous, for there was no connection between the colonies of the coast and the territory around Hudson Bay. The colonies of Spain were likewise separated, for Louisiana lay between Florida and New Spain. But Canada and Louisiana formed one continuous possession to the future expansion of which there seemed to be no limit but the ocean.

Spain henceforth regarded the advance of her rival with a distrustful eye, and attempts of the French to open a commerce with Mexico, either by way of the Gulf or overland through Texas, were met with absolute refusal. Both nations made military advances. Spain sent an armed expedition to the neighborhood of the Missouri, but it was defeated and destroyed by the Indians. She advanced her missions well into the interior and supported them by military garrisons. In 1722 the French built the advanced post of Orleans well up the Missouri river, and they likewise established posts on the Red and Arkansas rivers.[1]

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[1] See "Fort Orleans," list of posts. Appendix F.

The vicissitudes of European politics, it is true, often threw France and Spain for a time together in common cause, but never to such an extent as to remove the distrust with which each regarded the advance of the other into the unsettled territories between their American colonies.

In the fast approaching struggle for supremacy, which clearly could not long be averted, there was a great advantage on the side of England, arising from her more liberal colonial policy. Largely left to care for themselves, the settlements on the Atlantic coast expanded with a rapidity which formed a marked contrast to the slow and sickly growth of the French and Spanish colonies; for the policy of these two nations was to regulate colonial affairs entirely from home; to impose restrictions in trade, industry, and religion; to recruit the colonies from jails and houses of correction, and to grant their trade and commerce to individuals or companies. The blindness of certain governments in this respect is proverbial, and the experience of four hundred years has even yet failed to awaken the government of Spain to the true cause of her many colonial failures.

The various grants of land by Great Britain in North America, with their absurd western extensions, in some instances reaching to the Pacific, carried in themselves the seeds of future discord along the colonial frontiers. It was her advance into the valley of the Mississippi, or its principal tributary, the Ohio, that precipitated the final conflict. Those stirring times of 1753 and 1754, in which the personality of George Washington was ushered upon the stage of history, are familiar to everyone. The French and Indian War was, in its far-reaching consequences, the most important ever waged upon the soil of America, excepting possibly the late Civil War in the United States. Accustomed as Americans are to look upon the Revolutionary War as the fundamental fact about which their national destiny turns, they seldom pause to inquire what that Revolution would have amounted to, but for the results of the war that preceded it. The contest which gave this country to the Anglo-Saxon instead of to the Latin race, was one that assured the greatness of its future destiny. It was terminated by the treaty of Paris, February 10, 1763, by which France ceded to Great Britain Canada and all of Louisiana east of the Mississippi, excepting New Orleans and its island. Three months before this time the French King had given to Spain all of his American possessions not included in the pending treaty with England. Thus that nation, which at one time possessed the cream of the continent, was now left without a foot of its territory; and the two rivals between whom her possessions were divided confronted each other from opposite shores of the Mississippi.

And now comes another turn of the wheel of political fortune second in importance only to the results of the French and Indian War. Great Britain, in a moment of ill-advisement, abandoned the liberal policy which had so far made her colonies flourish altogether more prosperously than those of her rivals, and undertook to put into effect those restrictions and regulations which have been a blight to the growth of every colony where they have prevailed. Unfortunately for her, this attempt came too late in the process of colonial development to meet with anything else than stubborn resistance. Angered at this the mother country undertook to compel obedience by force. The world knows the result. A successful revolution ensued in which Great Britain lost all of her original colonies in America and all her conquests except Canada. In their place arose an independent nation destined to play a brilliant rôle in the future history of mankind.

The Mississippi had now become the frontier between the most conservative and bigoted of monarchies, and the youngest and most liberal of republics. It was not a change which Spain could view with satisfaction. The youthful blood and vigor of a new nation, established upon the very soil which before was only a colonial dependency, boded no good to the existing status of the Spanish upon the Mississippi. It was natural, therefore, that Spain should view the expansion of the population of the United States to the westward with feelings of apprehension and alarm. She sought by every possible means to obstruct it. She strove to detach the western country from the Union and incorporate it in her territories, so that the Mississippi and its tributaries might be under her own control. At one time there was a ray of hope in these designs, but as the new government became better established, as the Indians came to fear and respect it, and particularly when states west of the Alleghenies were admitted into the Union, these delusive prospects vanished forever.

It would be amusing, were it not an event of such profound importance, to note how suddenly the vast territory which Spain had received from France passed into the hands of the youthful rival whom she was watching with such suspicious dread. Napoleon Bonaparte had appeared upon the stage of history. Under his irresistible sway the mutations of fortune among European nations went on with terrific rapidity. Spain fell into his hands, and among the terms of peace wrung from her was the cession of Louisiana, which was accomplished by the secret treaty of Saint Ildefonso, March 21, 1801.

To the United States the right of the free navigation of the Mississippi was a matter of such overshadowing importance that her statesmen had ever been alert and watchful for any opportunity which might establish it more perfectly. They were not slow to discern, in the rapid changes at the time passing over Europe, that the occasion might arise which would hasten or retard, as the event might turn, this primary object of their desires. The cession of Louisiana to France, as rumors of that event began to circulate, was rightly viewed with grave apprehension. Might not that genius, which had overridden and reduced to his own will the venerable monarchies of Europe, turn his attention to the New World and attempt the conquest of that also? Would he be satisfied with restoring France to her own, or would he seek to embrace within his western empire the whole of North America? The boundless ambition of Napoleon no doubt reached so far. But the reality was not to be, and it is another proof of his unerring judgment that he was among the first to realize the impracticability of his schemes of empire in America. England controlled the seas, and the defense of Louisiana against such a power was impossible. He saw that in case of war with Great Britain, he would not only lose Louisiana, but lose it to the very power which he most desired to impoverish and humiliate. This contingency did in fact arise, and Napoleon took prompt measures to forestall its inevitable consequences and to thwart forever the ambition of England in this direction. He sold Louisiana to the United States on the 30th of April, 1803.

The announcement of the re-cession of Louisiana to France had hardly crossed the Atlantic and become known upon the Mississippi, when that of its sale to the United States arrived. It was at once apparent that this was the *finale* to the fitful changes in the past career of the colony. The new order of things was by no means generally acceptable to the foreign element of the population, either Spanish or French. They saw in it the death knell of their peculiar customs and laws, and they knew that the enterprising spirit of the Anglo-Saxon race would crowd them out of the avenues of industry and commerce even on the very soil where they had lived and toiled from infancy. But on the other hand the more discerning felt that it was at least a prospect of permanency in place of change, of self-government in place of the capricious rule of distant princes, of freedom in religion, industry, and commerce, in place of baneful restrictions and regulations. The transfer was made without serious disturbance; the current of affairs soon began to run smoothly, and it was not long before the most ardent lover of his parent country, whether France or Spain, ceased to regret the change.

Although digressing beyond the limits assigned to this work, it will not be amiss to refer to those subsequent events in the colonial history of Spain which show how well founded was her jealousy of the growing power of the United States. It was in 1804 that the transfer of Louisiana was consummated. Fifteen years later came the cession of Florida. In the course of the next twenty years successful revolution had extinguished Spanish sovereignty upon the continent of America, and before the nineteenth century had finished half its course the major part of the vast colony of New Spain had entered the expanding fold of the Republic of States.

But the downward career of Spanish empire had not yet run its disastrous course. In the providence of history the United States has been the instrument of retributive justice in punishing Spain for the accumulated wrong of centuries of colonial misrule. It was a fitting climax to the progress of Anglo-Saxon liberty throughout the world during the nineteenth century that it should fall to the lot of the American Republic, before the century was complete, to sweep away forever the last vestige of Spanish sovereignty in the Western World: nay, further, to supplant it in the distant Orient, until that once powerful nation, which discovered America and planted its flag in every clime, is left with only a few scattering islands, the pitiful remnants of world-wide colonial dominion.

President Jefferson, to whose administration belongs the credit of the Louisiana Purchase, lost no time in acquainting himself with the nature and extent of his new acquisition. The formal surrender of Lower Louisiana to the United States took place at New Orleans December 20, 1803. During the following winter, explorations were made by direction of the government along the Red and Washita rivers. An expedition was organized in the fall of 1803 to ascend the Missouri and cross to the Pacific ocean, but as possession of Upper Louisiana had not yet been given up, it was delayed until the following spring. On the 10th of

March, 1804, at the city of St. Louis, formal surrender of Upper Louisiana was made to the United States, thus fulfilling the terms of the treaty with France. On the 14th of May, Lewis and Clark set out on their long and perilous expedition. This celebrated performance stands as incomparably the most perfect achievement of its kind in the history of the world. The expedition reached the Pacific ocean, November 16, 1805, set out on the return journey March 23, 1806, and arrived in St. Louis September 23, 1806. The journey was accomplished with the loss of only one man, who died from causes apparently in no way connected with the expedition.[3] The information gathered was so exhaustive and correct that *Lewis and Clark* continued to be the standard authority on the region traversed by the expedition for fully forty years thereafter.

In the meantime Lieutenant Zebulon Montgomery Pike had ascended the Mississippi river from St. Louis to its source, acquainting the Indians and traders in that section with the change of ownership of Louisiana. After his return to St. Louis he set out in 1806 to explore the country to the southwest as far as to the Spanish frontier in the direction of Santa Fe. He passed westward through what are now Missouri, Kansas, and Colorado until he reached the mountains, and then turned south into Spanish territory, where he was arrested by the authorities of that ever jealous and suspicious government. After much delay he was released, and he returned to the United States in July, 1807.

These important explorations bring this preliminary sketch down to the period covered by the present work.

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[3] Sergeant Charles Floyd, who died near the present site of Sioux City, August 20, 1804. Nearly a century after his death, the government of the United States, aided by the State of Iowa, erected a suitable monument over the grave of the first soldier of the United States who died west of the Mississippi river. This monument is a solid masonry obelisk one hundred feet high, and was dedicated May 30, 1901. It was designed and erected under the supervision of the author of this work.

Louisiana was now national territory. Official explorations had been made in all directions, and the acts of formal possession were at an end. Some forty years, however, were yet to elapse before this vast territory was to engage the serious attention of the world. In the meanwhile, it was given over to the trader and trapper, the hunter and adventurer, the traveler and the missionary. In desultory fashion it was explored in all directions, and lines of travel gradually developed. Slowly but surely emigration began to seek those remote regions, and by 1843 it had set heavily in that direction. Then followed in startling rapidity those events which in less than seven years made this country well known throughout the world, and transformed the great West into a theatre of commercial and industrial activity.

It is of the fragments of history that fill up this formative period of less than two score years that we purpose here to treat; to recover as far as possible those obscure beginnings in the founding of a great empire which the historian has neglected for the more alluring themes connected with the building of the superstructure.

CHAPTER II.

RISE OF THE AMERICAN FUR TRADE.

Importance of the fur trade in American history — France the pioneer in the fur trade — Spanish fur trade — Great Britain and the fur trade — Rise of the Hudson Bay Company — Rise of the Northwest Company — Rivalry between the two companies — Amalgamation of the two companies — Business methods of the Hudson Bay Company — The Mackinaw Company — Spanish fur companies — Tardy development of an American fur trade — Trade of the Northwest coast — State of American fur trade in 1807.

THE fur trade is indissolubly connected with the history of North America. For more than two centuries it was the principal business, and often the only one, transacted upon the frontiers. The visionary dreams of the early explorers, that the new world abounded in precious metals awaiting only their arrival to be gathered in inexhaustible quantities, led the first adventurers upon this coast to seek the wealth of the mine rather than that of the forest. The Spanish were slow to abandon this alluring motive of discovery and conquest, and the treasures which they had been able to wrest from the more civilized races of the continent served to keep alive their zeal in this direction long after any real reason for its existence had disappeared. But at a very early day the French and English turned their attention, in their New World projects, to more substantial, if less attractive, fields of enterprise. North America, above those latitudes where a semi-tropical climate prevails, was, at the time of its discovery, the richest and most extensive field for collecting fine furs upon the face of the earth. The conditions encountered here seemed to have been especially prepared by nature to facilitate the exploitation of this particular species of wealth. The continent was thinly populated with a wild race of men who dwelt in the wilderness and passed their lives in common neighborhood with the native fauna. Although the fur-bearing animals supplied the Indian with food, clothing, and shelter, still his numbers were not sufficient to prevent their increase, and both man and beast dwelt and bred their species on a common ground. The stranger came from across the ocean, introducing new wants to the Indian, which the latter was able to gratify by giving the native furs in exchange for the white man's goods. The shrewd trader was thus enabled, at trifling cost to himself, to put an army of these native fur gatherers into the field, and the product obtained in this way he retailed in Europe at an enormous profit. Fortune seekers both in France and England were quick to grasp the importance of this new mine of wealth, and individuals or companies in both countries petitioned their governments for exclusive privileges in its development. Royal grants for this purpose thus came to be a prominent feature of American colonial history.

The valley of the St. Lawrence became the first, and remained the principal, field of this business, with Montreal as its chief emporium. Nature had fitted this valley as the great commercial highway of the fur trade. Through an unknown and unexplored wilderness, where no overland route existed, a chain of lakes and a net work of rivers gave easy access to almost every portion. Low portages connected the lakes on the south and west with the Mississippi valley, whence the Missouri opened a way to the distant mountains. To the north the transfer was easy to another system of waterways connected with Hudson Bay and the rivers that flowed from the limitless expanse of the northwest, beyond which, by somewhat difficult portages, lay the great rivers of the Pacific coast. The St. Lawrence valley was thus the natural highway for the peculiar trade of the wilderness, and for two hundred years it was the scene of a traffic unparalleled for romantic interest in the history of commerce.

France was the pioneer nation in building up an American fur trade, but her sovereignty in North America did not continue to the time when that business reached its highest development. Under the French régime, both in Canada and Louisiana, the trade was always farmed out to monopolies, but none of them were enduring and successful. They served, however, the purpose of extending a knowledge of the country and making known its resources. In fact, the chief interest of the French fur trade lies not so much in the trade itself as in what it did for the cause of discovery. It will be remembered that Joliet, who, with Marquette, discovered the upper Mississippi, was a trader. A leading motive in the work of La Salle was trade, and while he was pushing forward his explorers into new regions, he was sending back the furs which he had gathered on his way. After the founding of Louisiana and the colonies of Illinois, it was mainly the fur trade that gave them nourishment and support. The expeditions of the Verendryes to the interior of North America, about 1740, were actuated by the same motive. It thus transpired that, while government efforts to foster the trade were uniformly unsuccessful, as shown in the brilliant but disastrous career of The Hundred Associates under the patronage of Richelieu, the royal grant to Crozat, and the meteoric company of the notorious John Law, the individual trader and the lonely trapper were penetrating ever farther into the wilderness, spreading geographical names in their native tongue, and building up a commerce which it was not in the power of royal patronage greatly to hinder or promote.

Next to its influence upon the cause of exploration, the chief interest which attaches to the French fur trade in later times is the part it played in bringing on the war between England and France for supremacy on the continent of America. It was the aggressive advance of French territorial claims to the interior, as evidenced by the erection of fur-trading posts, that aroused the jealousy of England, and ultimately led to the French and Indian War. By the result of this war France lost her American colonies, while the fur trade, as carried on by her subjects, was for a time well-nigh broken up. It was not revived until many years thereafter, and then under widely different auspices.

The Spaniards never figured prominently in the American fur trade. Their operations in the southern countries were of a different character, inspired by different motives, while nature herself had not supplied that region with the kind of wealth which she had lavished upon the less hospitable regions of the north. Their principal operations in this line were carried on in the province of Louisiana during the forty years before its transfer to the United States.

It would naturally be expected that a commercial nation like Great Britain, and a leading one as well in appropriating territory in the new world, would not fail to secure a share in this obvious source of wealth. In fact, to England belongs the credit of founding the greatest of all fur companies, and the longest-lived and most prosperous of commercial monopolies. In 1610 Henry Hudson discovered the bay which bears his name, an inlet from the ocean to the very heart of the continent. As with nearly all the great geographical discoveries, the advantages to be reaped from this one were not at once fully appreciated. No real movement was made to establish a trade on the shores of the bay for half a century afterward, and when it came it had its origin in the French fur trade of Canada. In 1659 Groseilliers and Radisson, Frenchmen and traders in the service of the Compagnie des Cent Associés, made their way into the remote wilds beyond Lake Superior, and there ascertained that it was practicable to reach Hudson Bay by continuing overland to the north. The following year they returned to Montreal with a heavy cargo of furs. Two more journeys to the northwest wilderness added materially to the stock of information as well as to the financial resources of these adventurers, and they now bent their whole energies to carry their operations to the shores of Hudson Bay. But a new patent by the French Government gave to other parties the exclusive right of trade in these regions, and Groseilliers saw his well-laid schemes destroyed in their very beginning. Disappointed, he returned to France and sought redress from his government for what he considered an injustice to himself and his associate. Failing in this he addressed himself successfully to the English court. Under the patronage of Prince Rupert he was outfitted with a vessel and cargo, and in 1668 sailed for Hudson Bay. Well nigh at the southeastern extremity of the bay he built the first post ever erected on its shores and named it Fort Charles for the English king.

This success led to the formation of the famous monopoly officially known as The Governor and Company of Adventurers of England, trading into Hudson Bay, but known in common parlance as the Hudson Bay Company. The date of the charter was May 2, 1670. The privileges granted were such as no other company ever enjoyed. Over a region of unknown extent it was given absolute proprietorship, supreme jurisdiction in civil and military affairs, the power to make laws, and to declare war against pagan peoples, and in fact nearly all the attributes of a sovereign and independent government.

This monopoly did not enjoy throughout its career a smooth and prosperous existence. In its earlier years it received repeated checks from the French, who claimed the territory included in its charter — a claim that was subsequently on one occasion recognized by the British Government. The French made several expeditions both by sea and land against the company's establishments. They were generally successful, and the forts were at one time all captured and some of them destroyed. The operations in these waters, in which the brothers d'Iberville, founders of the Louisiana colony, greatly distinguished themselves, were almost uniformly favorable to France and highly creditable to her navy. But the fur company did not succumb to these reverses and kept right on with its operations. Later events turned the tide in its favor. The Treaty of Utrecht, 1713, greatly curtailed the rights of France as recognized in the Treaty of Ryswick, 1697, while the Treaty of Paris, 1763, abrogated them altogether, and left England undisputed sovereign of North America except to the west and southwest of the Mississippi, and on the Pacific coast.

Thus the rising monopoly was for a time relieved of its troublesome interlopers, and enjoyed the uninterrupted exercise of its trade. It did not pursue an aggressive commercial policy. It did not seek a rapid extension of the field of its operations, and it built but few posts. It sought to secure its furs by trade with the Indians rather than by its own hunters, for it would thus more surely protect the fur-bearing animals from extinction. This prudent management was very profitable. The stock rose greatly in value. Admission to the company was difficult, and the managers sought to conceal all knowledge of the country, or at least to depreciate its importance, in order not to arouse inquiry or induce pressure for a share in its privileges. Had there been a well-defined boundary of its territories so that it could have excluded with certainty all intruders, there is no telling how long this quiet prosperity might have gone on undisturbed. But to the west and southwest there was nothing definite as to boundaries, and a rival presently arose which was only too ready to take advantage of this important fact.

This rival was the Northwest Company of Montreal. It was the outgrowth of the old French trade in the region of the upper lakes and beyond. As that trade began to rally from the destructive effects of the French and Indian War, it fell principally into the hands of a few Scotchmen, leading merchants of Montreal, who for several years acted in the main independently of each other. The trade began to revive about 1766, and by 1780 had regained a large part of its former vigor. But the evil effects of individual competition, and the loss of profits due to the smallpox scourge of 1782, induced the leading traders to enter into an association for the common pursuit of the business. This took place in the winter of 1783-4, and the new company was styled the Northwest Company of Montreal.

At this time the traders had already established their great emporium upon the northern shore of Lake Superior, where their business was conducted with the remote and vast interior. This was the Grand Portage, which was connected by a road about ten miles long with the water courses above the falls of Pigeon river, whence a water route led all the way to the very base of the mountains.

The new company, like the Hudson Bay Company, had rough sailing in the earlier years of its existence. Not all of the Montreal traders were satisfied with the new arrangement. A rival association was organized under the name of Pond, Pangman and Company, including Alexander Mackenzie, who later became famous through his explorations. Pond soon deserted to the older company, and was largely responsible for a tragedy which grew out of the rivalry between the two concerns. This was the killing of John Ross, a trader of the smaller company. So alarmed were the parties on both sides at the possible consequences of this event, that a union of the two factions was formed in 1787, from which date the full career of the Northwest Company may be said to have begun.

The operations of the company from this time on were conducted on a truly imperial scale. One of the partners, Alexander Mackenzie, began a series of explorations of the northwest, which, in 1793, carried him to the Pacific ocean. Another far-reaching movement was the engagement, as astronomer and surveyor for the company, of David Thompson, who had lately left the service of the Hudson Bay Company. He was directed to survey the 49th parallel, which formed the international boundary west of Rainy Lake, to explore the country along that line, and to find suitable locations for the company's posts as its operations should extend farther to the westward. Thompson's work carried him to the Missouri river at the Mandans, and later to the mouth of the Columbia. It had an influence on national affairs quite beyond its importance in the business of the company.

Meanwhile the regular trading operations of the company were pushed with aggressive vigor in all directions. After eight years of uninterrupted progress, further dissension arose in the company councils resulting in a separation. The seceding partners were led by Alexander Mackenzie, and the old company by Simon McTavish. Mackenzie went to England, published his travels, received the honor of knighthood, and returning to Canada in 1801, was instrumental in organizing the New Northwest Company, or as it was generally known, the XY Company.[1] The rivalry between the two factions went on with vigor until the death of McTavish, in 1804. In the following year a coalition was formed and the united company became stronger than ever.

When the Northwest Company came into existence its headquarters were at Montreal, and its principal depot at the Grand Portage. The operations of the company had extended far into the northwest, between the Hudson Bay territories on the one hand and Louisiana on the other, and embraced considerable territory in the United States. The trade had been carried quite to the base of the Rocky mountains, and as already stated one of the traders had crossed to the Pacific ocean, being the first white man to perform this feat north of the Spanish possessions. As a result of surveys it was found that the depot at the Grand Portage was on United States territory, and a new post was built farther north and named Fort William in honor of William McGillivray, chief agent of the company at Montreal. It was at Fort William that the agents from Montreal and the wintering partners from the interior assembled each summer for the exchange of outfits and the determination of plans for the ensuing year.

[1] The use of these letters is explained by a recent writer as being entirely accidental and arising from the fact that they were the letters of the alphabet which immediately followed the last of the letters N W., the initials of the Northwest Company.

The daring enterprise of the Northwest Company, and the bold extension of its operations regardless of the territorial rights of the Hudson Bay Company, forced that lethargic concern into active resistance. Inasmuch as we are here only indirectly concerned with the operations of these companies, it may be permitted to step a few years ahead of our narrative to note the outcome of this contest. The rivalry between the two companies knew almost no bounds. Wherever one might establish a post the other would plant one beside it in order to watch its operations and forestall any advantage of position. When opportunity occurred, forts were burned, property confiscated, and even lives sacrificed, for the criminal and civil jurisdiction of Canada did not yet reach to these remote regions, and there was no government restraint upon acts of lawlessness.

Finally the Hudson Bay Company took a radical step to annoy and harass their opponent. In the year 1811 they granted to the Earl of Selkirk a large tract of land in the Red River valley, between the United States boundary and Lake Winnipeg, for the purpose of founding there a colony. The Northwest Company resisted by the most energetic measures this encroachment upon what they claimed as their rights. The new settlement extended directly athwart their path to the westward, and cut their territory in two. They determined that it should not be made. Lord Selkirk, who was a benevolent, high-minded and able man, had embarked his private fortune, and based his dearest hopes, upon the upbuilding of this colony, and he was in no sense disposed to yield. The brunt of the struggle fell upon the innocent colonists, and the stories of their misfortunes during the ten years following are among the most touching and pathetic in the history of North American settlement. The struggle at length reached a climax in 1816, when it attained the proportions of actual war between the Northwest people on the one side and the Hudson Bay people with the colonists on the other. Many lives were lost on both sides, but the colonists suffered most severely.

The grave aspect which this rivalry had now assumed was such that it could no longer escape the attention of the mother country. The contestants were brought into court, and in 1819 the matter was laid before the British parliament. It is said that over half a million dollars were expended in litigation without effecting any satisfactory settlement. Finally the inevitable course, which had long been pointed out by more far-sighted men,[2] that of coalition, took place in 1821, the united company retaining the name of the older rival. New regulations relating to criminal and civil jurisdiction were promulgated, and new descriptions of boundaries were made. The rights of the company were not materially abridged, while its territories were vastly extended, and its power for peaceful commerce increased. Meanwhile the noble efforts of Lord Selkirk began to prosper, and the Red river colony secured a new and permanent lease of life.

The organization of the Hudson Bay and Northwest companies, their internal regulations, method of dealing with the Indians, and policy in preserving the fur-bearing animals from extinction, were the outgrowth of long experience, and embodied the highest wisdom in the management of their extensive affairs. The experience of each of the rivals was added to that of the other in the amalgamated company after 1821, and formed one of the most perfect commercial organizations of which the world has any knowledge. The systems of service and promotion protected the company from incompetent servants. To gain high position in the service, one must begin at the bottom and work up. All must work for the company's interest, and none were allowed to engage in any private trade. Employes were frequently changed in station to break up any irregular practices which might grow up with long residence in one place, and this rotation was taken advantage of to reward faithful service and punish the reverse. The company's officers had power to try and punish offenders.

[2] Mackenzie had suggested the advisability of union as early as 1801.

Military duty was exacted whenever necessary, and a regular uniform was provided. The whole organization, from the governor down through factors, traders, and clerks, to the lowest *mangeur de lard,* was based upon the principle of perfect discipline, absolute subordination of individual interest to that of the company, and a regular promotion based upon merit. Long experience had perfected all parts of this intricate machine, and not even the greatest of modern railway systems can excel it in thoroughness of detail and organization.

In its dealings with the Indians the same wise policy was apparent. Where not necessary to meet competition the sale of liquor to the natives was not generally indulged in. All trade was upon a fixed, though just, basis, and the Indians knew exactly what to expect. The traders were men of experience with the natives, and were well acquainted with the Indian character. Intermarriage with native women was common, from the chief officers down to the ranks, and thus bonds of mutual interest were created. Although this company did not always escape difficulties with the Indians, it was generally on terms of peace with them, and its hold upon them as against irregular traders was well-nigh absolute. It may readily be seen how powerless must have been a private trader and even a strong company against this embodiment of power, wealth, experience and organization. We shall have occasion in the course of these pages to note several attempts to enter the field in competition with the company, and their invariable result in failure.

There was another British company which occupied a place of some prominence in the early fur trade, and which was founded after the career of the Northwest Company had well begun. From the fact that its headquarters and principal establishment were at Michilimackinac, it was generally known as the Mackinaw Company. It operated mainly within the territories of the United States, around the shores of Lake Michigan and westward to the Mississippi, and in Canadian territory east of Lake Huron.

At St. Louis in the days of Spanish rule there were companies trading under grants from the governor of Louisiana. Maxent, Laclede and Company was one of these. After the death of Laclede the company was dissolved and others took its place. Down to the time of the cession there had been several of these associations, and the trade had extended well up the Missouri and far out into the prairies. None of these companies ever attained any extensive success.

In the United States no great company arose until late in the first decade of the nineteenth century. Circumstances had been unfavorable to the building up of the trade. The War of the Revolution absorbed the attention of the people, and its termination left them little prepared to enter at once upon great commercial undertakings. The Indians were generally hostile, and under British influence. For a number of years Great Britain continued to hold the posts along the upper lakes, whereby the trade of those regions was kept in the hands of her own subjects. For a decade or more after the peace with Great Britain the obstacles to the organization of an American fur company were almost insuperable. Such organization as did finally ensue was brought about mainly through the efforts of one man, a foreigner by birth, John Jacob Astor. The career of this king of the American fur trade will be noted more at length in our treatment of his great enterprise on the Pacific coast.

There still remains to be noticed the trade of the northwest coast, which bears an intimate relation to the history not only of the American fur trade, but of the nation itself. The trade was originated by the Russians as early as the middle of the eighteenth century. The motive which led adventurers from this nation to the American coast was the great abundance there of sea otter, whose fur is the most precious known. These furs the Russians collected and carried to the Siberian coast, whence they were transported partly to the interior and partly to the frontier of China. The operations of these traders extended along the coast from Bering Strait to Vancouver Island, and were the foundation of Russian claims to territorial sovereignty on that portion of the American continent.

American traders also obtained a foothold in the lucrative trade of the northwest coast. The celebrated voyage of Captain Cook, 1776-80, made known to the world this reservoir of wealth; but as it was several years before an authentic account of the voyage appeared, the results of the discovery were not immediately taken advantage of. In 1787, shortly after the appearance of the narrative of Cook's discoveries, some Boston merchants, enthused by his reports, undertook to send some ships to see what was to be found there. This was the beginning of the American trade on this coast, a trade which soon developed almost to the proportions of a monopoly; for down to the time of the War of 1812 there were more than three times as many American vessels engaged in it as those of all other nations together.

The trade, as practiced by the Boston merchants, developed into quite a system. A cruise ordinarily lasted three years. The vessel would leave home with suitable merchandise, in time to reach the coast in the spring of the year. After trading all summer along the coast, it would go to the Sandwich Islands for winter, and would return again the following spring. After another season's trade it would sail with its cargo to China, exchange it for goods suitable to the American market, and then return home.

Briefly to summarize what has been related on the subject of the American fur trade, its status at about the year 1807 was as follows: The Hudson Bay and Northwest companies were fighting for supremacy in the country northwestward from Lake Superior. The southern line of their operations lay well within United States territories, touching the sources of the Mississippi and extending to the Missouri in the vicinity of the Mandan villages. The Mackinaw Company and other traders controlled the territory about the upper lakes and westward to the Mississippi. John Jacob Astor was gradually getting a hold upon the

American trade, and was already forming the schemes which occupied his later life. The various St. Louis traders carried on their business up the Mississippi for some distance, but mainly up the Missouri and its tributaries, having already encountered the Northwest Company on the upper river. A large part of their trade at this time was along the Osage and Kansas rivers and southward toward the Arkansas. A few isolated expeditions had gone as far west as the Rocky mountains, and one or two attempts had been made to penetrate to Santa Fe. Lewis and Clark had crossed to the Pacific and had returned, making known the vast resources of the upper tributaries of the Missouri and of the country beyond. Pike had made a similar expedition to the southwest. With these extensive regions now under the flag of the United States, the field of enterprise in the fur trade was open to all who chose to embark in it. Traders at once prepared to improve the opportunities thus thrown open to them, and their enterprises thereafter went on unceasingly until the onward march of civilization terminated them altogether.

CHAPTER III.

ST. LOUIS.

Importance as an emporium of trade — Founding of the city — Laclede — Spanish rule at St. Louis — The "Affair of 1780" — Transfer of Upper Louisiana to the United States — Early growth of St. Louis — Advent of the steamboat — Early population of St. Louis — The fur trade — Comparison of the old city with the new.

IT is doubtful if history affords the example of another city which has been the exclusive mart for so vast an extent of country as that which was tributary to St. Louis during the entire period embraced in this work. Every route of trade or adventure to the remote regions of the west centered in St. Louis. The very location at the mouth of the Missouri gave it monopoly of all trade originating in the valley of that stream, whether among the wild tribes of the mountains three thousand miles away, or among the infant settlements which were advancing with slow but sure footstep along the lower course of the river. The Oregon Trail, which began, as an independent line of travel, near the present site of Kansas City, Mo., brought down the tribute from the high mountain sections of the central west, from the interior basin of the Great Salt Lake, and to some extent from the more remote regions on the Pacific slope. In like manner the Santa Fe Trail, which left the Missouri river at the same point as did the Oregon Trail, and was coincident with it for some distance west, carried to and fro that peculiar commerce which long existed with the foreign city of Santa Fe, and even with the distant provinces of old Mexico and of southern California.

Following the lines of trade, all travel to the Far West, whether for pleasure or for scientific research, all exploring expeditions, all military movements, all intercourse with the Indians, and even the enterprises of the missionaries in that distant country, made St. Louis their starting point and base of operations.

It was here that trans-shipment of commerce was made to eastern markets by way of the Mississippi, the Ohio, or the Great Lakes. Warehouses and mercantile establishments arose for outfitting the numberless expeditions to the interior. The government maintained a military post near by, and had here its principal office of Indian affairs for the trans-Mississippi tribes.

The city of St. Louis is therefore in the fullest sense an historic datum for all events which transpired during this period in the vast regions to the westward; and some notice of its contemporaneous history is indispensable to a complete exposition of our subject.

St. Louis is one of the few American cities of the first class whose birth antedates the birth of the Union. Boston, New York, and Philadelphia on the Atlantic, Detroit on the Great Lakes, New Orleans on the Gulf, San Francisco on the Pacific, and St. Louis in the interior, comprise the number. The founding of St. Louis and the choice of its location appear to be closely related to that event which has already been referred to as the most important in American history — the conquest of Canada and eastern Louisiana by the English. In 1762 the firm of Maxent, Laclede and Company of New Orleans was granted the exclusive trade of the Missouri river and of the Mississippi as far as to the mouth of the river St. Peters. The grant was an important one, and the company took prompt steps to realize its advantages; but as they had to organize a large and costly expedition and send to Europe for their merchandise, it was not until August 3, 1763, that they were able to leave New Orleans.

The responsibility of selecting a site for the company's proposed establishment was entrusted to one of its number, Pierre Laclede Liguest, who is described as a man of ability and well qualified for so important a duty. Among his companions was Auguste Chouteau, then a lad of only thirteen, who, notwithstanding his extreme youth, is said to have been Laclede's most trusted subordinate.

When the expedition left New Orleans the news of the Treaty of Paris and that of the cession of the west bank of the Mississippi to Spain had not yet arrived. Laclede therefore set out on his long journey in the belief that the country included in his grant was still a dependency of France. The progress of keelboat navigation up the devious course of the Mississippi was very slow, and the summer and autumn had worn away before the expedition arrived in the neighborhood of the French settlements above the mouth of the Ohio. Here in all probability Laclede received his first intimation of the cession of the east bank of the river to Great Britain, and at once saw that this event was of great consequence to the future of his enterprise. We are led to infer that it was his desire to build his post on the east bank of the river, where he would be among his own people, in easier reach of supplies, and protected against danger from the Indians on the opposite bank. But now this choice was no longer open to him.

The season was too far advanced when he reached St. Genevieve, the lowest of the upper settlements, and the only one then located on the west bank, to permit him to establish his post before winter would set in, and it became imperative to find a place where he could store his merchandise until spring. The village of St. Genevieve had no available building of sufficient capacity, and Laclede was perplexed to know what to do, when a messenger arrived from M. De Neyon de Villiers, commandant at Fort de Chartres on the east shore, offering Laclede the necessary accommodations at that place until the English should arrive. Laclede promptly accepted the offer, and arrived at Fort de Chartres November 3d, just three months after leaving New Orleans.

After having made such arrangements as he could to carry on a trade from Fort de Chartres during the winter, he set out with Chouteau and a small party in December to select the site of his post. The news of the cession of the east bank of the river to Great Britain had the effect of enlarging Laclede's views of the future of his proposed establishment. He saw that there would be a large emigration of the French from the Illinois settlements, for many of the inhabitants would refuse to live under English rule. They could not return to Canada, for that was also included in the cession, and New Orleans was a thousand miles away. Why not offer them a refuge at the place where he proposed to build his post? The idea evidently became a part of Laclede's plan, for Chouteau, who later wrote a narrative of these events, repeatedly refers to his selection of a site as the place of his proposed " settlement " or " village."

The choice of site now being restricted to the west bank, and as near as possible to the mouth of the Missouri, yet below it, lest traffic descending either stream might be compelled to ascend the other in order to reach the post, the situation where St. Louis now stands was certain to be selected. Here was a bold, firm bank, high enough to give immunity from floods, yet not so high as to be inaccessible in loading and unloading cargoes; a bench of land broad enough for the proposed village; and a safe and commodious channel close to the shore, where boats could be loaded and unloaded with ease and safety. Add to these desirable features that the surroundings were of great beauty, the site evidently salubrious, and the quick eye of Laclede told him that he had found what he was after. He might have followed the shore for many a mile in either direction without finding its superior.

Chouteau says that Laclede " was delighted to see the situation, and did not hesitate a moment to form there the establishment that he proposed. . . . After having examined all thoroughly, he fixed upon the place where he wished to form his settlement, marked with his own hand some trees," and then gave Chouteau explicit directions as to what he desired to have done. Upon his return to Fort de Chartres he expressed his great satisfaction with the site selected, and even indulged the prediction that here would yet arise "one of the finest cities in America."

Navigation opened early in the following spring, and Chouteau set out in the beginning of February with thirty men, "nearly all mechanics," and reached the site of the proposed establishment on the 14th of that month.[1] On the morning of the 15th work was begun in earnest, and ground was broken for the first time to erect buildings where now stand the stately edifices of a city of half a million people. Laclede arrived early in April and "occupied himself with his settlement, fixed the place where he wished to build his house, laid the plan of the village he wished to form, and named it St. Louis in honor of Louis XV.,[2] whose subject he expected to remain for a long time."

Thus in the midst of the solitudes of a yet unexplored country, upon the shores of the greatest river of the continent, this small band of practical men, eschewing all ostentatious ceremony or display, and guided solely by the natural fitness of the situation for the purposes of peaceful commerce, laid the foundations of the future metropolis of the Mississippi valley. Not least of the honors which have befallen men in the past is that of having chosen from the wilderness those situations where their posterity has loved to dwell; where it has opened its marts of trade and industry; where it has built its temples of learning and religion, and where it has assembled that infinite variety of the products of civilization which unite to form a great city. Such an honor will ever attach to the name of Pierre Laclede Liguest.[3]

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[1] There is some discrepancy among the authorities as to this date, but the one here given has the weight of evidence in its favor.

[2] Named indirectly in honor of Louis XV., by giving it the name of his patron saint, St. Louis, who was Louis IX. of France.

[3] The view of the founding of St. Louis which I have here given is at variance with the conclusions of certain historians of St. Louis, who maintain that Laclede was ignorant of the Treaty of Paris until after

Although the residents of the newly-formed village were not aware of the fact, they were at this time virtually subjects of the King of Spain, and so remained for just about forty years, when the city passed to its final place in the history of nations. It was not at once that the Spanish assumed possession. Laclede remained sole director of the colony for upward of a year, or until the arrival of St. Ange de Bellerive. This officer had been left at Fort de Chartres by De Neyon de Villiers to surrender that post and the surrounding country to the English; and immediately upon the consummation of this event he withdrew his troops to St. Louis. By general consent he was placed in charge of the affairs of the young settlement, and so remained until 1770, May 20, when the first Spanish governor, Don Pedro Piernas, assumed control. There were seven Spanish governors in all, and with one exception their administrations were highly acceptable to the people, to a degree, in fact, which forms a bright exception to the general unpopularity of Spanish colonial government.[4]

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he had selected his site. In doing this they are obliged to treat the narrative of Auguste Chouteau as a mere fabrication — an ingenious after-thought designed to give a philosophical explanation of a very fortunate event. Such a course is a drastic one, to say the least, for even if we are to assume that this distinguished pioneer were willing to pervert the facts of history to his own credit, the motive in this case is wanting. Whatever may have been the cause of the selection of the site, whether that above given or some other, the credit of it would nevertheless redound to the good judgment of the founder.

The view of these writers is apparently based on the fact that news of the cession did not reach New Orleans for some months after Laclede's departure. It ignores the other fact that the news might, and probably did, first reach the settlements of the Illinois by another route than that of the lower Mississippi. Tidings of such deep importance to all the colonists of both countries would not travel slowly, and it is entirely within the range of possibility — it is even highly probable — that the Illinois settlements knew what had happened before Laclede arrived at St. Genevieve. The time required to reach the Mississippi, either by way of the Great Lakes or by the Ohio, would make this possible.

[4] Don Pedro Piernas, from May 20, 1770, to May, 1775; Don Fran-

For the most part the affairs of the colony moved on very smoothly. There was but one serious menace from the Indians, and that was far from being as important as historians have represented. It is known as the "affair of 1780," and undoubtedly grew directly from the struggle then going on between Great Britain and her American colonies. The country to the eastward of the Mississippi had been wrested from the English through the valor of General George Rogers Clark, and there were some attempts to retake it. One of these, to all appearances, was the incursion of the Indians in 1780, and their abortive attempt upon Kaskaskia, on the east bank of the river. Failing in their main purpose, some of them crossed to the west bank, May 26, 1780, and murdered six people on the Grand Prairie, some four or five miles northwest of St. Louis. This occurrence became magnified in the course of time into a terrible attack upon the infant village, in which some sixty inhabitants lost their lives, many more were wounded, and others carried into captivity. But slight as it actually was, it produced a deep impression upon the community. The people had grown to believe that their village was privileged with immunity from Indian attacks, for nothing of the kind had ever occurred. No fortifications had been erected, and so great was the feeling of security that certain rumors of attack, which are said to have been afloat for several days prior to the events just related, were cast aside as unworthy of attention. But after this affair no time was lost in placing the village in a state of defense. A line of fortifications was built around it, and the citizens for a long time faithfully guarded it. But this was the last, as it had been the first, serious danger from the Indians which ever threatened St. Louis, unless we include the many individual out-

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cisco Cruzat, from May, 1775, to 1778; Don Fernando de Leyba, from 1778 until his death, June 28, 1780; Silvio Francisco Cartabona (acting governor), from June 28, 1780, until the arrival of the new governor; Don Manuel Perez, from November 25, 1787, to 1793; Zenon Trudeau, from 1793 to August 29, 1799; Charles Deshault Delassus, from August 29, 1799, to end of Spanish rule, March 9, 1804.

rages which were committed upon the settlers by the Osage Indians, and by the Sacs and Foxes during the War of 1812.

The greatest event in the history of St. Louis, except its founding, was its transfer, with that of Upper Louisiana, to the United States. The quiet tenor of colonial life had rarely been disturbed by events in the outer world, and it is doubtful if these were followed very closely or with much interest by the contented inhabitants. But they were at length suddenly awakened from the easy routine of their affairs by the glad tidings that they were about to be restored to the sovereignty of France; and fast upon the track of this news came the less welcome announcement that their city and their country had been sold to the Americans. It was an unusual spectacle that took place in St. Louis March 9 and 10, 1804, and one filled with sadness to the old inhabitants, who were mostly of French descent. The formal transfer of Upper Louisiana from Spain to France had not been made when the time arrived for its transfer to the United States. In order that this transfer might be made from *France* to the United States, according to the terms of the treaty with Napoleon, Captain Amos Stoddard, United States Army, who had been delegated to receive the country from France, was empowered by the French government to act as its agent in the transfer, which must first take place from Spain to France. The ceremony of the first transfer occurred between the hours of 11 A. M. and 12 M., March 9, 1804. The Spanish flag was lowered and the standard of France was run up in its place. The people, although conscious that the sovereignty of France was being resumed but for a moment, and simply as a necessary formality in the final transfer, nevertheless could not restrain their joy at seeing float over them once more the standard which even forty years of the mild sway of Spain had not estranged from their memory. So deep was the feeling that, when the customary hour came for lowering the flag, the people besought Captain Stoddard that it might remain up all night. The request was granted, and the flag of France floated for twenty-four hours over the city from which it was about to be withdrawn forever. At the appointed time on the following day, March 10, 1804, the ceremony of transfer from France to the United States was enacted. The flag of the French Republic was withdrawn, and the Stars and Stripes waved for the first time in this future metropolis of the valley of the Mississippi. Thus St. Louis became perhaps the only city in history which has seen the flags of three nations float over it in token of sovereignty within the space of twenty-four hours.[5]

The growth of St. Louis during the forty years from its founding to its transfer to the United States had been very small — in fact, almost nothing. The sudden exodus of the French families to the west shore as a result of the cession of the east shore to Great Britain, gave the new town a population of over five hundred by the end of its first year's existence. In 1800, thirty-five years thereafter, the population was only 925. At the time of the cession it could not have been more than a thousand. Contrary to general expectation the effect of the cession in stimulating immigration was at first small. The War of 1812, and the resulting danger from the Western Indians, who were to some extent under British influence, together with the general stagnation of business enterprise throughout the country, held back the growth of the town for many years. The United States census of 1810 showed only 1,400 population; a local census of 1815 showed 2,000, while the next United States census, that of 1820, gave 4,000.

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[5] "The author of these sketches [History of Louisiana] was the constituted agent of the French Republic in Upper Louisiana, and in her name received possession of that province on the ninth day of March, 1804, and the next day transferred it to the United States."— Stoddard.

The interesting episode regarding the flag rests upon tradition, but of more than ordinary probability. It was related to the author by Mr. Pierre Chouteau of St. Louis, whose ancestors were eye-witnesses of the ceremonies attending the transfer.

At about this latter date St. Louis began to feel the effect of that important innovation in transportation methods — the development of the steamboat. We may place as the third great event in her history, the arrival of the first steamboat. This event took place on July 27, 1817, when the steamer *Pike* moored at the city landing. The first attempt to navigate the Missouri by steam was in 1819. The *Independence* left St. Louis for Franklin, Mo., on the 16th of May of that year, and either on that day or the next entered the mouth of the Missouri. The great importance of this new invention, by which the current of the rivers was overcome and all distances virtually shortened to one-fourth their former length, can not be overestimated. It was fully appreciated by the thoughtful men of St. Louis at the time, and filled them with a just enthusiasm at the brilliant prospects before them. "In 1817," said a writer in the *Missouri Gazette,* "less than two years ago, the first steamboat arrived at St. Louis. We hailed it as the day of small things, but the glorious consummation of all our wishes is daily arriving. . . Who could or would have dared to conjecture that in 1819 we should have the arrival of a steamboat from Philadelphia or New York? Yet such is the fact!"

The growth of steamboat navigation on all the western rivers after this period was rapid and continuous. St. Louis became a great trade center, and soon her long levees had not space enough to accommodate the boats which assembled there from every direction — from New Orleans at the south and from the falls of St. Anthony at the north; from the Alleghenies in the east and the Rockies in the west, and even from the distant cities of the Atlantic coast. It was a wonderful development, and marks the era of real growth of the city of St. Louis.

A feature of the early life of St. Louis, which will always have an attraction for the readers of its history, is that which relates to the manners and customs of its first inhabitants. St. Louis today bears scarcely a trace of its early character. The two or three hundred original families who were here at the time of the cession would now be well-nigh lost in the hundred thousand families to be found within the city limits, even if they had preserved unimpaired the customs and language of their fathers. But these families have themselves yielded to the current of innovation, and have drifted far from the ancient landmarks. They no longer use their native language in business affairs, and while they adhere to the religious faith of their fathers, the church no longer fills the place in their life that it once did.

The population of St. Louis at the time of the cession was extremely heterogeneous. New Orleans was the parent of the enterprise which led to its founding, but the nearly century-old towns of the Illinois — Vincennes, Cahokia, Kaskaskia, and Fort de Chartres — furnished most of the original population. Thus the two great provinces of New France, Canada and Louisiana, united in the up-building of this future great city. But the creoles of the north and south bore little enough resemblance to the same generations of Frenchmen in the motherland. The rapid progress of France in the disturbing ideas of the times, which culminated in the Revolution, was not shared by the colonists in the new world; and the settlements in the far interior of America were more like the French villages of the time of Louis XIV. than those of the period in which they actually flourished. This early French population of the Illinois was to some extent what the peasantry of French Quebec are today. They loved the quiet, listless ways of their fathers. The enterprising spirit of the Anglo-Saxon had no charms for them. Honest and punctilious in their dealings, courts and lawyers were almost unknown. Crime was very rare and jails were not found necessary. Wealth and beggary were alike absent. Ambition was not a trait of their character. Art and learning had not yet taken root. Even the commonest manufactures seem to have been lacking and the people derived their living from the field and from the chase. But with all this apparent lack of the qualities which seem to us essential to the growth of any community, they were a happy people. They were fond of amusements, in which the celebration of church fêtes bore a prominent part. They were unselfish, hospitable and friendly in their intercourse, and a kind of democratic spirit prevailed which their change from monarchical rule to that of a republic has certainly not operated to foster. On the whole they represented a type of life over which the contemplative mind delights to linger, and it is a doubtful question whether in its extinction the world has not lost something which the present substitute does not adequately replace.

St. Louis was perhaps less noteworthy as an example of this mild and benevolent type of life than were the little villages from which she sprung. The more enterprising of the French families settled here. They did not settle down like their neighbors to the tilling of the soil, but devoted themselves more to commercial pursuits. To such a degree did they discard agriculture in favor of trade that they were compelled to purchase their subsistence to some extent from the neighboring towns ; and hence the origin of the soubriquet *Pain Court* (short of bread) which her neighbors used to fling at her. There was not the strict propriety in this nickname, however, that there was in *Vide Poche* (empty pocket) and *Misère* (wretchedness) with which she was wont to taunt her sisters in return.

In addition to the French element, St. Louis at the time of the cession contained representatives of other races and nationalities. There were numbers of Spaniards who had come while the colony belonged to Spain. The Americans had already gained a considerable foothold, which every year served to increase. The new government brought its quota of civil officials who, with the army officers stationed there, became an important accession to the town. Then there was a floating population composed of the voyageurs and adventurers who were constantly going to and returning from the wilderness. A considerable element of negro population in the status of slavery existed, and the sight of Indians in the streets of the village was never wanting. Add to these elements the very considerable contingent of respectable visitors who came and remained long enough to see the new country, frequently also making excursions into the interior, and we have as varied and mixed a population as can be imagined.

The great business of St. Louis in these early years was her trade with the wild regions of the far west, at this time consisting mostly in furs. St. Louis was an offspring of the fur trade and her growth for three-fourths of a century depended almost entirely upon it.[6] Her principal merchants were all more or less concerned in it, and most of them were familiar by actual experience with life on the frontier. Pierre Chouteau, Jr., the leading mercantile genius of St. Louis, and one of the greatest in the country, made several trips up the Missouri, at one time going as far as to the mouth of the Yellowstone. Manuel Lisa spent a large part of his time in actual life in the wilderness. General Ashley spent much time on the upper Missouri and beyond the mountains on Green river and in the Salt Lake basin. Sublette and Campbell were both trained mountain men. It was in these remote fields that the foundations of great fortunes were laid, and that the substantial business character of St. Louis began its development.[7]

It is always a pleasing recreation of the fancy to trace the changes which time works in great cities, particularly where those changes are so rapid and extensive as they are in most American cities. St. Louis was built, and long remained, "under the hill"; that is, it was on the first bottom or terrace immediately on the bank of the river where the levee, Main street and Second street now are. This terrace led to an abrupt limestone bluff facing the river, which has now been wholly graded down and replaced by a well-paved levee of gradual slope. It was very many years before the city climbed the hill at all. It was mostly located along one street, *La Rue Principale* (also called *La Rue Royale*), the present Main street. Second street was called *La Rue de l'Eglise,* or Church street, because it ran in front of the block where the old cathedral and church buildings stood. Third street was called *La Rue des Granges,* or Barn street, while Fourth street had not come into existence. The cross streets likewise had French names, as for example, *La Rue de la Tour* (Tower street) the present Walnut, which extended back from the river to the fort and tower on the hill where Fourth street now intersects Walnut.

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[6] For fifteen years before the cession the annual value of the St. Louis fur trade is said by one authority (Thomas Allen) to have been $200,000; but this was probably an exaggeration.

[7] It is a matter of much interest, and one that few residents of St. Louis are cognizant of, that the supremacy which their city held as a fur market in its early days she holds in an even greater degree today; and it will even more surprise many to know that the magnitude of the St. Louis fur trade is now actually larger than in the years when the great fur companies were exploiting those virgin regions where the beaver had never been disturbed by man. The character of the trade has changed somewhat, but its volume is as great as it ever was.

The defenses which were constructed after the "affair of 1780" lay mainly on the hill. The line started from the river at the foot of the present Franklin avenue and extended back to the bastion at the intersection of Franklin and Third. It then ran in nearly a straight line to the fort and tower between Fourth and Fifth at the crossing of Walnut. Thence it extended nearly parallel to the river to a point in Third street near Lombard, where was located in 1797 a blockhouse on the banks of Mill creek. From the blockhouse it ran directly to the river. On or near this defensive line were four stone towers.

Mill creek, *La Petite Rivière,* occupied the valley where the railroads of St. Louis now enter and leave the city. Its source, says Brackenridge, was about "three miles from town among a few tall oaks," where it took its rise in "four or five silver fountains." At an early day a dam was thrown across the valley and a considerable pond was thus created near by the present site of the Union Station. It was long used to furnish power to a flour mill, and was a favorite resort until the city overgrew it.

The extensive plateau stretching back in gentle undulations and culminating in the ridge along which Grand avenue now runs, reaching far to the northward, was called *La Grande Prairie.* Beyond this extended the broad area of rolling timbered ground, full of the beauty of luxuriant foliage, and presenting a picture which the modern St. Louisan may still behold in the undisturbed topography of Forest Park.

Such was the St. Louis of our ancestors. How different it is today! Approaching from the east shore of the river, the visitor crosses on one of the world's greatest bridges and sees below him to right and left the broad levee and row of low buildings where the ancient village was built. Suddenly he is lost in darkness, for the train enters a tunnel through the "hill" and does not emerge until it reaches the valley of *La Petite Rivière.* But the little creek and its ancient pond and mill are no longer to be seen. In their place lie the innumerable tracks and the yards pertaining to the railroads which center in the metropolis of the Mississippi valley and terminate in one of the finest railroad stations in the world. Beneath the surface of the ground, and in place of the former stream, lies a mammoth sewer through which a hundred *petites rivières* might flow.

Just on the summit of the "hill," near where the old fort used to stand, is the business center of St. Louis. Many a building now rises in that vicinity which alone represents more wealth than the entire village possessed in 1804. Far up and down the river for a distance of many miles the uninterrupted succession of buildings extends. To the westward over the "Grande Prairie" it stretches from six to ten miles, and the *élite* of the city now dwell where were only fields and woods when St. Louis became an American city. All over this immense area an intricate system of mains and pipes carries the supply of water and light for half a million people, while in every direction powerful electric cars of modern creation bear to and fro an active and prosperous population.

It would be an endless task to pursue this comparison into all the details, even of interest and importance, which readily suggest themselves. For St. Louis is a prophecy fulfilled, and could Laclede but return for a moment into her midst, with what pride might he not recall his enthusiastic prediction that here should yet stand "one of the finest cities of America"!

CHAPTER IV.

EXPEDITIONS OF 1807.

Manuel Lisa — Lisa, Menard, Morrison and Company — Drouillard kills Bissonnette — Expedition meets John Colter — Lisa's skill with the Indians —Passage of the Aricara villages — Experience with the Assiniboines — Lisa builds a post in the Crow country — Result of year's trade — Mandan chief Big White — Preparations for chief's return home — Stopped by the Aricaras — Battle with the Aricaras — Failure of the expedition.

FOUNDING OF FORT LISA.

BEGINNING with the close of the government explorations in 1806, the narrative portion of the present work takes up the thread of events with the following year, when for the first time an attempt was made to organize an extensive trade in the newly discovered regions around the sources of the Missouri.

The Spanish régime of forty years in Upper Louisiana gave to the fur trade but one prominent name of that nationality. This was Manuel Lisa. In boldness of enterprise, persistency of purpose, and in restless energy, he was a fair representative of the Spaniard of the days of Cortez. He was a man of great ability, a masterly judge of men, thoroughly experienced in the Indian trade and native customs, intensely active in his work, yet withal a perfect enigma of character which his contemporaries were never able to solve. Although he never seems to have commanded the warm support and confidence of his associates, still so fully were his abilities recognized that he was selected to command in the field nearly every expedition sent out by the St. Louis companies of which he was a member.[1]

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[1] A careful biographical sketch of this distinguished representative of the early St. Louis fur trade will be found in the following chapter.

Lisa was quick to grasp the importance of the information brought back by Lewis and Clark concerning the resources of the countries traversed by these explorers, and in his characteristic way he at once set about to reap his share of its advantages. He formed an association with William Morrison of Kaskaskia, Ill., an experienced and successful trader, and Pierre Menard of the same town who for many years was connected with one or another of the St. Louis companies. Careful preparations were made to send an expedition under Lisa to the upper rivers the following spring, with a view of establishing posts among those distant tribes who had not yet been brought into relations with American traders. It was a venture of no little hazard for the destination was more than two thousand miles away, among tribes whose friendship was at least doubtful, and a goodly portion of the route lay through the country of other tribes already well known for their treacherous and desperate character. To a less courageous spirit than that of Lisa the obstacles would have seemed too great.

The expedition left St. Louis in the spring of 1807.[2] The merchandise destined for barter with the Indians was carried on a keelboat and the progress of the expedition was limited to the slow rate at which this boat could be dragged up the winding course of one of the most troublesome navigable streams in the world.

Early in the journey an incident occurred which illustrates some of the harder features of the fur trade. Lisa had with him as his right hand man, George Drouillard,[3] who had been an interpreter and hunter with Lewis and

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[2] The data for the history of this expedition are less complete than could be wished. The *Louisiana Gazette*, the first newspaper of St. Louis, and now one of our best authorities upon those early times, was not established until 1808. There are no letters or documents extant bearing upon the enterprise. Our main authorities are Brackenridge, who received an account of the expedition direct from Lisa, and Thomas Biddle, who wrote from personal knowledge of the work of the fur traders in the early years of the century.

[3] "A man of much merit, . . . peculiarly useful from his knowl-

Clark and had now associated himself with the first trading expedition to the regions he had visited. At the mouth of the Osage river Antoine Bissonette, one of the engagés, deserted. Lisa ordered a search for him and commanded that he be brought back dead or alive. Drouillard overtook and shot him, wounding him severely. Lisa put the wounded man in a boat and sent him back to St. Charles, doing all that was possible for his comfort ; but he died on the way. When Lisa and Drouillard returned the following year, 1808, Drouillard was tried for murder before J. B. Lucas, presiding judge, and Auguste Chouteau, associate. The jury found him not guilty.

The passage of the mouth of the Platte was marked on the present occasion by an event of more importance than the enactment of the good-natured jokes which world-wide maritime custom inflicts upon those who for the first time cross the "line" from one hemisphere to the other.[4] A boat with a solitary passenger, a white man, was descried descending the river. Such a sight, at this early date, was most unusual, and the members of the expedition were eager to learn who it might be. By good fortune it proved to be the very man of all others whom Lisa, had he been permitted to choose, would have wished to meet. It was John Colter, one of Lewis and Clark's men, who had crossed to the Pacific with those officers, and on his way back the following year had stopped to hunt and trap upon the upper tributaries of the Missouri. He was fresh from the very country which Lisa intended to visit, and that sagacious leader, it may be safely assumed, omitted no inducement which might secure to his party so valuable an acquisition. Colter agreed to return, and, abandoning his own little craft, turned his face for the third time toward the sources of the

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edge of the common language of gesticulation and his uncommon skill as a hunter and woodsman." Lewis and Clark.

Lisa's expedition was commonly mentioned at the time as that of Lisa and Drouillard.

[4] See Part V., chapter III., description of the Platte river.

Missouri. It was now over three years since he had left the frontiers of civilization.

The danger from hostile Indians to those early expeditions up the Missouri was a very formidable one. Above the friendly tribe of the Omahas, who dwelt not far from the mouth of the Platte, the navigator had to pass the country of six or seven tribes who might prove hostile or friendly according as circumstances over which he had no control might turn. It was a very rare thing for a keelboat to run the entire gauntlet unmolested, while in many instances disastrous conflicts were precipitated. The channel of the river, so capricious and shifting, often ran close to the shore, and placed a boat party in frequent jeopardy, if not absolutely at the mercy of the Indians. A leader of great experience, full of nerve and tact, and of that scarcely less valuable quality described by the word "bluff," was indispensable in these delicate emergencies. The lives of the party frequently hung as upon a thread which the slightest maladroitness or weakness would break. Defects of leadership cost many a life on the hostile shores of the Missouri.

But Lisa was as far master of the art of conciliating the good will of the Indians as was any trader that ever ascended the river. He knew when to be gentle and when severe, and could adroitly mingle with his protestations of friendship demonstrations of ability to defend himself. While smoking the pipe of peace he did not conceal the muskets of his followers, nor the more formidable swivels upon the boat. He knew the indispensable function of presents, and he was never niggardly in this respect where parsimony might mean ruin. In short he understood all the secret springs which actuate the savage mind, and with marvelous dexterity he played them so as always to avert catastrophe. His enemies accused him of going beyond the legitimate field of diplomacy and of warding off danger from his own head by directing it upon those of competing traders. Be that as it may, he never was caught in an Indian snare and never personally had serious difficulty with the savages.

On the present occasion Lisa passed through the country of the Sioux without trouble, but was stopped by that most treacherous of the Missouri tribes, the Aricaras. He found between two and three hundred warriors awaiting his approach, for news always traveled among these Indians faster than boats ascended the river. They evidently meant trouble, and probably intended to prevent Lisa's further advance. They fired a volley across his bow at the place where they had decided that he should land. There was no way to ignore their imperious command, and Lisa put to shore. Immediately upon touching the beach he ordered that no Indians should get in his boat, and the chief stationed a guard to keep off the crowd. The women then appeared with bags of corn with which to open trade ; but an Indian rushed forward and cut the bags with his knife, whereupon the women took to flight. Whether this was a premeditated signal for a general onslaught is not clear, but if so, the purpose was foiled by Lisa's watchfulness and preparation. They had failed to throw him off his guard. Instantly calling his men to arms and training his two swivels upon the shore, he gave such evidence of a purpose to open fire immediately that the Indians retreated in confusion. The chiefs then came forward holding their pipes before them in token of pacific intentions. Lisa permitted them to approach and they apologized for the incident, characteristically throwing the blame of it upon some irresponsible person who they said was a "bad man." Lisa accepted this hollow explanation without being in the least deceived by it. He quickly finished his business at the villages and resumed his voyage.[5]

Further difficulty was encountered among the Mandans — a very unusual circumstance, for these Indians were nearly always friendly to the whites — but Lisa's skillful management again carried his party safely through. Without the least trepidation he left the boats and alone passed through the entire line of villages, keeping the Indians back from the river until the boats were safely past. He probably left a small outfit of goods at this point.

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[5] We shall presently see how different an interpretation was placed upon Lisa's action at the Aricara village by a party who followed him up the river.

Some distance above the Mandan villages an immense band, numbering four or five thousand Indians, belonging to the wandering Assiniboine tribes, was encountered. Here Lisa thought it expedient to adopt a bolder policy and terrorize the Indians before actually coming in contact with them. He caused his swivels to be heavily loaded and every man to prepare his musket as if about to go into battle. Having completed his preparations he steered across the river and made directly for the place where the Indians were collected on the bank. When he had arrived within a hundred yards he ordered his swivels and musketry to be discharged, taking care, however, to aim where the projectiles could do no harm. The Indians were appalled at the sight and sound and fell over each other in their panic to get to the hills for safety. A few of the chiefs and warriors remained and asked to smoke the pipe of peace. The usual ceremonies were gone through with, presents were given, and protestations of friendship were exchanged, after which the little party, thankful for another escape, pursued their perilous way up the river.

Lisa mentions no other encounters with the Indians upon this trip. He steadily kept on his way up the Missouri until he reached the mouth of the Yellowstone, where later was to stand one of the greatest of the fur-trading establishments, and then ascended the latter stream until he reached the mouth of its principal tributary, the Bighorn river. Here Lisa stopped and prepared to commence his trading operations. But he had made a false move in ascending the Yellowstone instead of the Missouri, considering that one of his chief purposes was to open a trade with the Blackfeet Indians. He was now in the heart of the territory of the inveterate foes of that tribe, the Crow nation. Whatever might be his real intentions, this act of going to the Crows to build his post could not but make the jealous Blackfeet suspect that he was in league with their enemies. Lisa probably did not realize the far-reaching consequences of this act at the time and very likely ascended the Yellowstone on the advice of Colter, who had found it a good fur country and who had had little occasion to observe the political situation of the various tribes.

Be this as it may, Lisa halted in the heart of the Crow territory at the mouth of the Bighorn river, and commenced his post at the junction of the two streams on the right bank of each. The post has since been variously known as Fort Lisa, Fort Manuel, and Manuel's Fort. No relic of it has survived and the precise spot where it stood is unknown, but to it belongs the honor of being the first American trading post established on the upper rivers and the first building erected within the limits of the present state of Montana.

Of Lisa's operations during the following winter we know nothing except as they are connected with the adventures of John Colter.[6] It is known that he made a strong effort to open up relations with both the Crows and Blackfeet. With the Crows he was successful, but not so with the others. The outcome of the year's trade, however, was evidently satisfactory, and Lisa returned to St. Louis in the spring of 1808 elated with his success. The glowing accounts brought back by him bore fruit in the more pretentious company which continued his work in the following year.

ATTEMPTED RETURN OF THE MANDAN CHIEF.

When Lewis and Clark arrived at the Mandan villages on their way back from the Pacific in 1806, they persuaded the Mandan chief Shahaka, more commonly called Gros Blanc, or Big White, to accompany them to St. Louis with a view of making a visit to President Jefferson. One of the conditions of this arrangement was that the chief should be safely escorted back to his nation when the contemplated visit was over. Accordingly in the following summer the United States took measures to carry out its agreement and an expedition was organized for the purpose.[7]

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[6] Colter's connection with this expedition has won for the intrepid hunter a permanent place in the history of the west. So important were his adventures, even apart from the objects of Lisa's expedition, that their consideration has been made the subject of separate treatment. See Part IV., Chapter X.

The chief's party consisted of himself and his interpreter, Rene Jesseaume — with their wives and one child each. The escort consisted of two non-commissioned officers and eleven privates under the command of Ensign Nathaniel Pryor who, as a sergeant, had accompanied the expedition of Lewis and Clark. There had but recently come to St. Louis a deputation of Sioux Indians consisting of eighteen men and women and six children accompanied by William Dorion. It was arranged that they should return at the same time, but they were provided with a separate escort of soldiers commanded by Lieutenant Joseph Kimball. There also ascended the river at this time two trading parties, one for the Mandan trade, consisting of thirty-two men under the direction of Pierre Chouteau, and the other of ten men destined for the Sioux trade led by "young Dorion," presumably a son of the interpreter who was for a time with the Lewis and Clark expedition. There were, besides, one hunter, three hired boatmen, and a second interpreter. The total strength of the joint party, including the officers but omitting the Indians, was seventy-two men. Including the Indians the number was ninety-five. The whole party were to proceed together as far as to the Sioux country, whence Ensign Pryor's party with that of Pierre Chouteau would continue on to the Mandans.

The departure from St. Louis took place late in May, 1807. The expedition proceeded prosperously, although very slowly, passing all the lower Sioux bands in safety. Here Kimball's and Dorion's parties left the expedition, which now, reduced to about fifty men, continued the journey and reached the lower Aricara village at 9 A. M., September 9th. The Indians of this village fired several guns in the direction of the boats. Dorion, the interpreter, asked what was the matter and they replied by inviting the party to come on shore and obtain a supply of provisions. The hospitable treatment which Lewis and Clark had received from these same Indians the year before threw the party off their guard and the boats were ordered to land. Here it was learned that the Aricaras and Mandans were at war with each other and that several of the upper Sioux bands were allied with the Aricaras and were present in the village.

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[7] The data for this expedition I have mainly found in four letters by General William Clark and Nathaniel Pryor. These were edited by Dr. Elliott Coues and published in *Annals of Iowa*, 1895, pp. 613-620.

There now came on board a Mandan woman who had been captive among the Aricaras for several years, and who imparted some interesting and important information which would probably not otherwise have been found out. It appears that Mr. Frederick Bates, who had given Manuel Lisa his license to trade on the upper river, visited St. Charles as he was about to start and obtained a promise from him to wait and accompany the party escorting the Mandan chief. Lisa, with his characteristic facility for doing what he deemed best for his own interests regardless of promises, went on alone. According to the story of the Mandan woman, when he found the Aricaras disposed to stop him, he told them that a large party with the Mandan chief would soon arrive, and after giving them a considerable part of his goods, including some guns and ammunition, he was allowed to proceed. The Indians determined to kill him on his return, but let him pass on for the present lest rumors of their acts and intentions might reach the parties below,[8] and cause them to turn back.

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[8] Lisa's account of this affair, as related by Brackenridge, has already been given. Pryor and Chouteau were led to believe that Lisa had secured his own passport through these tribes at their expense. How far their suspicions were true cannot be said. It was not the only charge of this kind against Manuel Lisa, but it is a singular fact that his various acts of alleged bad faith, such as that here related, come

This fortunate interview acquainted Ensign Pryor with the true situation. He ordered the Mandan chief to barricade himself in his cabin and prepared his men for action. After considerable parleying and speech-making, in which Ensign Pryor explained the purpose of his .journey, and after presenting a medal to one of the chiefs, the party left the Indians at the lower village in no good humor and proceeded to the upper village. The two interpreters, Dorion and Jesseaume, went by land through the villages. The Indians being clearly bent on mischief, Pryor determined to land, for the double purpose of taking his interpreters on board and of seeing the chief of the upper village, whom he had not been able to communicate with in the village below. The Indians ordered the boats to proceed up a narrow channel near the shore, but the whites discovered the trap in time and refused to comply. They now made known their purpose to detain the boats, saying that Lisa had told them that it was the intention of the present party to remain and trade with them. They first seized the cable of Chouteau's barge, intending to attack the party in which there were no soldiers, and motioned to Pryor to go on. This Pryor refused to do, but seeing the desperate state of affairs, he urged Chouteau to offer the Indians some concession. Finally Chouteau agreed to leave with them a trader and half his goods; but the Indians, confident in their ability to capture the outfit, refused the offer.

Meanwhile the chief of the upper village came on board of Ensign Pryor's barge and demanded that the Mandan chief go on shore with him. The request was peremptorily refused. The Indians now assumed an insolent and aggressive manner. They demanded a surrender of all the arms and ammunition. The chief to whom the medal had been given threw it on the ground and one of Chouteau's men was struck down with a gun. Raising a general war-whoop they fired on the boats and on Chouteau and a few of his

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only from those who claim to have suffered by them. The reputable historians of the time make no mention of them, and they are evidently to be taken with much caution.

men who were on the shore, and then withdrew to a fringe of willows along the bank some fifty yards back. Ensign Pryor had prepared himself for this contingency and immediately replied with the fire of his entire force. The willows were more of a concealment than a protection and the Indians probably suffered considerably. The contest was maintained for over a quarter of an hour, but as the number of Indians was so great as to threaten destruction to his party if the fight were continued, Pryor ordered a retreat. This was in itself a difficult thing to execute, for Chouteau's barge had stuck fast on a bar, and the men were compelled to get out into the water and drag it for some distance, all the while under the fire of the Indians. At length the boats were gotten off, and floated down the current, the Indians following along the bank and maintaining the fight for upwards of an hour.

It was not until sunset that the pursuit was finally abandoned, and then only on account of the death of one of the Sioux chiefs, the very man who had been in Ensign Pryor's boat. He wore a white bandage around his head and this mark served to distinguish him among his followers with whom, to the number of about forty, he was trying to reach a projecting point which the boats must pass. He was singled out by those in the boats and instantly killed. His followers gathered around him and abandoned the pursuit of the boats which soon passed out of sight.

The losses in this conflict were three of Chouteau's men killed and seven wounded, one mortally. Three of Ensign Pryor's party were wounded, including the interpreter, Rene Jesseaume.

Ensign Pryor now proposed to the Mandan chief that they should attempt to make the rest of the distance, about three days' march, by land, going well back from the river into the prairies and thus passing around the hostile Indians. The chief would not consent on account of the wounded condition of the interpreter and the encumbrances of their wives and children. The party then returned to St. Louis.

Thus ended the first attempt to return the Mandan chief to his nation. Ensign Pryor expressed his opinion that it would require a force of not less than four hundred men to accomplish the expedition with the temper of the Indians as it then was. It was thought at the time that the hand of the British was plainly apparent in inciting the northern Indians to this and similar outrages. Whether such was the case or not may be doubted, but it was the general belief, shared even by those high in authority. The incident was the beginning of that series of outrages committed by the treacherous Aricaras upon the traders in which many white men lost their lives during the next twenty years.[9]

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[9] For an account of this tribe of Indians see Part V., chapter IX.

CHAPTER V.

THE MISSOURI FUR COMPANY.

MANUEL LISA, ITS FOUNDER.

Manuel Lisa — His supposed attempt in the Santa Fe trade — His journeyings — Made sub-agent — His work in the War of 1812 — Becomes president of the Missouri Fur Company — His death — Magnitude of his work — His energetic nature — His enemies — His marriage — His Indian marriage — His name and language — His religion.

OF the three principal fur companies which operated from St. Louis to the westward—the Missouri Fur Company, the Rocky Mountain Fur Company and the American Fur Company — the first-named was the oldest, and had nearly run its course before either of the others was well established in the St. Louis trade. The history of this company is practically the history of one man, who was from the first its leading spirit, and for a large part of its history the only man of prominence connected with it. So remarkable was his life, and so strong a part did he play in the early history of the Missouri fur trade, that an extended notice of his career is an essential preliminary to a history of the company.

Manuel Lisa, Indian trader, was born of Spanish parents in New Orleans, September 8, 1772.[1] His father, Christopher Lisa, came to this country in the service of his government about the time that the Spanish took possession of Louisiana. Nothing of interest concerning the father's career nor of young Lisa's early life has come to light. It is known that the father spent the rest of his life in the Spanish service and that young Lisa came to St. Louis at an early date, probably not later than 1790. He had become well established in his lifelong occupation, the fur trade, before the end of the century, for one of the first notices on record concerning him is that of his securing from the Spanish government about the year 1800 the exclusive trade with the Osage Indians on the Osage river. He must have already gained some reputation and experience as a trader to be given so important a grant, for he thus displaced Pierre Chouteau, who is said to have had the privilege of the trade for upwards of twenty years.[2]

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[1] This is the record on Lisa's tombstone in Bellefontaine Cemetery, St. Louis. His birthplace is generally given as in one of the West Indies.

Our first definite knowledge of Lisa begins with the period covered by the present work. He went up the Missouri river in 1807 ; built his post at the mouth of the Bighorn ; returned in 1808 and was the moving spirit in the organization of the St. Louis Missouri Fur Company in the winter of 1808-9. He ascended the river again in the spring of 1809 to his post on the Bighorn, which he transferred to the new company. He returned to St. Louis in October, 1809.

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[2] In a letter to Lieutenant Z. M. Pike, written by General Wilkinson at St. Louis shortly after Pike's departure in 1806 on his tour of exploration to the southwest, occurs an interesting reference to some trader whose name is purposely withheld, but whom the latest editor of Pike's Journals, Dr. Elliott Coues, thinks he can identify as Manuel Lisa. Wilkinson informs Pike that this trader has on foot a scheme to carry an expedition to Santa Fe, and he warns Pike to take measures to prevent it. It is quite possible that the robust ambition of Lisa may have looked so far in search of profitable adventure. He was at this time probably in relation with William Morrison, who had tried to open communication with Santa Fe two years before, and he may now have been considering a project of this sort. Why it should have excited the umbrage of General Wilkinson, it is difficult to understand, unless it came athwart some incipient enterprise of that faithless servant of his country. There was certainly no harm in attempting to open up that line of trade which a few years later was to become an important branch of frontier commerce. The reference is of interest, both as indicating the breadth of Lisa's ambition, and showing that already he had raised up about him that swarm of enemies that harassed him the rest of his life.

In the following winter he attempted to go to Montreal on business connected with the trade, but was stopped by the embargo *(ce maudi embargau,* in his own bad French,) at Detroit and was compelled to return. In the spring of 1810 he again ascended the river, returning to St. Louis in the fall and remaining there the following winter. In April, 1811, he set out again for the upper river in the hope of learning what had become of Major Andrew Henry, and also for the purpose of bringing down the returns of the previous winter and of ascertaining the state of the company's property; for this was the last year of the term fixed for the duration of the company and a dissolution or reorganization was to take place in the following winter. This was the celebrated trip on which Lisa made such herculean efforts to overtake Wilson Price Hunt, who was in charge of the overland Astorian party. Lisa went as far as to his post at the Mandans but soon returned to the Aricara villages, where he remained until Henry came down the river. He went back to St. Louis in October.

The St. Louis Missouri Fur Company was reorganized during the winter of 1811-12, some of the members dropping out and Lisa becoming relatively a more important personage in the concern than before. He went up the river with two barges which left St. Louis May 2 and May 6, 1812, and remained at his Mandan post until the following spring. He arrived at St. Louis with the winter's trade June 1, 1813. During his absence war had broken out between the United States and Great Britain and new conditions had arisen in the upper Missouri trade. It was known that British agents were, or soon would be, active among the upper Missouri tribes, and that there might soon be precipitated upon the settlements the horrors of a frontier war. No man had more influence with these Indians than Lisa, and to him was assigned the task of endeavoring to hold them fast to the interests of the United States. He was made sub-agent for all the Missouri tribes above the Kansas, and set out again for the upper rivers in August, 1814. It is quite possible that Lisa went up to the Omaha nation during the previous year, but no record of such a trip has come to us. He now went up to Fort Lisa, an establishment which he had built a little above the present site of Omaha, Nebraska, and remained there until the spring of 1815. He succeeded beyond all expectations in controlling the Indians. He not only organized war expeditions against some of the tribes on the Mississippi who were allies of the British, but he secured pledges of friendship from nearly all the Missouri tribes, and went down to St. Louis in the spring of 1815 with forty-three chiefs and head men authorized to make treaties of friendship and alliance with the United States. It was mainly through his efforts that the upper Missouri tribes were prevented from going over to the British, and the government of the United States duly recognized the fact.[3]

Lisa's movements during the two years after the war are not very certain, but it is known that he wintered at Fort Lisa each year. In 1817 he resigned his commission as sub-agent in a letter,[4] which is well worth perusal, so true is it to the character of the man as shown in the record of his work. He now continued his regular trade, wintering at Fort Lisa and spending about two months of the summer at St. Louis. The Missouri Fur Company underwent various changes, Lisa becoming more dominant in its councils, and finally its president. He also seems to have been general agent or manager of the affairs of the firm of Cabanne and Company on the Missouri until he was deprived of the trust in February, 1819, because he had come down the river earlier than he was authorized to by ~~the terms of his~~ contract. But he doubtless came down from necessity of defending his interests against his ubiquitous enemies.

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[3] *American State Papers,* Vol. II., Indian Affairs, p. 76: "Manuel Lisa, salary, $548; agent for the tribes of the Missouri above the Kansas; greater part of his time with these tribes; resides in St. Louis; has been of great service in preventing British influence the last year by sending large parties to war."

[4] See Appendix B.

In 1819 the famous Yellowstone expedition went up the river and made its grand encampment for 1819-20 near Lisa's fort. Lisa left no stone unturned to cultivate the good will of his new neighbors and evidently rendered them many friendly offices. His wife, whom he had married but a year before, went up to his establishment and remained during the winter.

Lisa returned to St. Louis in April, 1820, in good health. This was his last voyage on the Missouri. About August 1st he was seized with a serious illness, the nature of which is not now known, and he died on the 12th of August at the Sulphur Springs some distance southwest of the old city, but now within its limits.

Thus closed the career of the most active and indefatigable trader that St. Louis ever produced. A faint idea of the prodigious labors that were crowded into his life may be gleaned from the fact that during its last thirteen years he ascended and descended the Missouri river twelve times, and possibly thirteen, if his movements in 1813-14 were more fully known. These journeys were never less than 670 miles long, the distance to Fort Lisa. Several trips were made to the Mandan establishments, about fifteen hundred miles, while two trips were made to the mouth of the Bighorn, about two thousand miles. In all he could not have traveled less than twenty-six thousand miles by river, or a total distance greater than the circumference of the earth. With a fair allowance for speed it will result that he must have spent not less than the equivalent of three solid years battling against the intractable Missouri or gliding swiftly with its downward current. Of the twelve winters included in the above period he probably spent seven, and possibly eight, in the wilderness.

Such are some of the more tangible facts that attest the extraordinary energy of this noted trader. He was beyond comparison the ablest of the traders so far as the actual conduct of an enterprise was concerned, and wherever he alone had control, and was not hampered by the councils of others, he generally succeeded. He once said, in explaining his successes: "I put into my operations great activity. I go a great distance while some are considering whether they will start today or tomorrow." Privation, hardship, incessant toil, were his constant portion. He could put his hand to the oar, if necessary, among his voyageurs, lead them in their songs, and cheer them to exertions which would have otherwise been unendurable. In brief he was a man who never shrank from any toil that occasion demanded, and a finer example of persistent effort throughout a lifetime can scarcely be pointed out.

It was but natural that so vigorous and aggressive a nature should have made enemies, but it is not easy to see why these should have been so numerous and vindictive. The leading characteristic of Lisa's life, next to those just noted, was the constant state of embroilment with others in which he lived. Even La Salle, whose entire career was beset by jealous enemies, could scarcely have surpassed Manuel Lisa in this regard. He was always at odds with some one who was jealous of his success or felt aggrieved at his interference with his own schemes. Every letter written by Lisa, which has come to notice in these studies, is mainly taken up in anxious complaints of the unceasing efforts of his enemies to ruin him. It is very difficult at this time, when all who knew him personally are dead, to fathom the cause of this remarkable feature of Lisa's career. All contemporary references to him are exceedingly flattering, and he evidently stood high in the esteem of his fellows. The primary cause of his incessant troubles seems to have been jealousy of his success as a trader. It will be noted that down to the day of his death no other trader succeeded in securing a foothold in the upper Missouri trade. There is also some evidence, although it all came from his enemies, that he was unscrupulous in the means he employed to promote his own interests. If this be so, the only difference between him and his detractors is that he was too sharp for them and succeeded where they failed. His methods certainly were as pure as theirs, and their wrath was kindled not so much on account of them as at their invariable success. There is no record of his ever having come out second best in a contest with his competitors.

He was accused in 1807 of having prevailed upon the Aricaras, in consideration of letting his expedition pass, to stop Lieutenant Pryor who was conducting to his home the Mandan chief. The evidence, however, is insufficient. Lisa could have had no motive for such an act, for Pryor's expedition was not in the trade, and could do Lisa no harm. Moreover it would have been madness on his part to antagonize a government expedition and thus perhaps cause his own trading license to be canceled. Crooks and McLellan brought a similar accusation against him in 1810, but no evidence of its truth has ever come to light.

So in every instance there is present the animus of jealousy on the part of rival traders, and such evidence must be taken with much allowance. That Lisa was always right in these matters, that he hesitated to resort to unscrupulous measures in resisting those of an enemy, is not to be supposed. His code was the code of the wilderness. He practiced it with unflinching severity, and his superior skill was chiefly what roused the ire of his less expert rivals.[5]

Thus his life was not only one of physical activity, but mental unrest and turmoil as well — a life not at all exemplified in his death, if we may accept the simple record in the diary of his father-in-law, Stephen Hempstead, who was present at his death bed, that "he died without distressing struggles."

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[5] The following letter is a fair example of the bitter feeling which was entertained toward Lisa by his St. Louis rivals. It is from B. Berthold to Pierre Chouteau, and is dated August 20, 1819.

"Mon cher Associé:

"Par Mr. Dent j'apprend que Manuel s'est décidé à ammener sa femme [to Fort Lisa], afin d'attirer chez lui la protection des officiers, vu qu'on lui a rapporté que l'on comptait surveiller sa conduite. Il se fait fort de si bien les traitter, qu'il espère en tirer de grands avantages.

"Dans le cas où vous seriez décidé à y faire une visite, je crois que de bonnes lettres d'introduction pour les officiers supérieures pourraient être de quelque utilité.

"L'escargot a toujours été trés vanteur, et d'avance a prétendu prédire ce qu'il ferait. Cette année il prétend se consolider à jamais. Je crois pour ma part, que quant à lui même, il est le moins capable de tous les traiteurs."

Lisa was twice married among his own people and had besides a wife among the Omaha nation. Of his first wife almost nothing is known. There was a tradition that she had been taken prisoner by the Indians and was held by them until General Harrison ransomed her, when Lisa, pitying her condition, married her. Her name, as given on deeds by her mark was Mary Charles or Polly Charles. She died in the autumn of 1817. She had three children. The eldest, Sally, died February 22, 1809. The second, Manuel, was born October 12, 1809, and died June 29, 1826, surviving his father six years. The third died in infancy, nearly a year after its mother's death.

Lisa's second matrimonial alliance was with the well-known Hempstead family. He married Mary Hempstead Keeney, widow of John Keeney, and daughter of Stephen Hempstead, August 5, 1818. This marriage was a very happy one and there are still extant two letters of Lisa written to his wife which evince the most tender affection for her. He was even heard to say that he had never before known what domestic happiness was. But this happiness had its drawbacks, though fortunately not of a serious nature. Lisa could not speak either English or French distinctly and his wife could not speak French or Spanish. Their difficulties in making each other understood were a source of much mirth to the family. Mrs. Lisa spent the winter of 1819-20 at Fort Lisa, and was probably the first white woman to ascend the Missouri so far. She was a most lovable and saintly woman, revered by all who knew her. She was always known, after her marriage with Lisa, as Aunt Manuel. She survived her husband nearly fifty years in widowhood, and died at Galena, Illinois, September 3, 1869, at the age of eighty-seven.

An interesting and pathetic romance is connected with Lisa's Indian courtship and marriage. On his part the alliance was made purely from motives of policy the better to ingratiate himself in the good will of the Omaha tribe, and to strengthen himself against the influence of rival traders. He sought the hand of a beautiful daughter of one of the principal families of the nation and after the usual negotiations with the parents the marriage was consummated with due ceremony. Lisa, with honorable frankness, made known the fact that he was already married, but this, in Indian custom, was not considered a bar to further marriage. The alliance took place in 1814. In the spring of 1815 Lisa, as was his wont, went down to St. Louis with the winter's trade and returned during the autumn. His Indian wife, who does not appear at first to have been very enthusiastic over the turn in her fortunes, fell deeply in love with Lisa before his return, perhaps in consequence of the birth of a daughter, a fine child, which occurred during Lisa's absence. She went to the river daily with her child and watched for the boat which should bring back the husband and father. Great was her joy when he arrived and she presented him with their first born, and the father himself seems to have been pleased with his new acquisition. Upon his return in the fall of 1816 his Indian wife presented him with another child, a son. When Lisa was preparing for his St. Louis trip in the summer of 1817, he wanted to take the first child, which he had named Rosalie, with him. The mother reluctantly consented, but seemed to realize that she should see it no more, and burst into the most frantic demonstrations of grief when father and child disappeared.

In the fall of 1817 Lisa's first wife died, and after his return from his post in the following summer, he married Mrs. Keeney. When he took her to Fort Lisa in the fall of 1819 he sent word to have his Indian wife removed from the immediate vicinity of the post. She could not remain away, however, and after a time came to the post with some of her friends and sent their little son, who had been named Ray-mond, to Lisa. Peril had further endeared the child to her, for during Lisa's absence both mother and child had narrowly escaped death at the hands of the Sioux. While one day engaged with other squaws tilling the soil, the little baby strapped to its cradle board reclining against a tree, the Sioux were seen approaching. All fled in terror, but the mother, quickly remembering that she had forgotten the child, rushed back in the very face of the Sioux, seized her precious burden and fled for the post. When she reached the fence around the post the Sioux were almost upon her, and she threw the board, baby and all, with her full strength to the other side. Mother and child escaped, although four of their companions were slain. Lisa received the child affectionately and after giving the mother some presents bade her go to her people.

When Lisa was preparing to depart for St. Louis in the spring of 1820 he sent for his Indian wife and told her that he intended to take the remaining child to St. Louis to be reared and educated there. The mother was so overpowered with grief that she seized the child, ran to the river, and getting quickly into a boat, rowed to the other side, where she remained out of doors all night. The next morning, she went back, gave the child to Lisa, saying that she knew it would be better off where he wished to take it, but begged that he would take her also. She would not trouble him but would live in any nook or corner that he might provide for her, if only she could be permitted now and then to see her children. But Lisa was inflexible. He offered her rich presents and bade her return to her people, telling her that their relation to each other could no longer continue. The wretched woman burst into a paroxysm of grief and taunted Lisa with faithlessness, saying that their marriage was for life and could not be broken off ; that Lisa had ruined her opportunities for marriage among her own people, and now was about to desert her and carry away her children. But these entreaties, whatever weight they may have had with Lisa, could not prevail. What she asked was impossible and it was Lisa's desire to benefit the children that alone made him wish to take them with him. He was now reaping the sad consequences of a step taken solely for purposes of policy. He persisted in his decision and would have carried it into effect had not the Indian Agent interfered and forbidden him to take the child from its mother.[6]

Lisa died soon after, and in his will directed his executor to provide for the education of these two children, and left two thousand dollars each for them when they should become of age. Whether these benevolent provisions were ever carried out does not appear, nor what became of the two children. As all of Lisa's other children died without issue, it is through the children of his Indian wife, if at all, that the blood of their distinguished parent has found a direct descent to posterity.

Lisa's name once appears, in an official document, as Manuel de Lisa, but he always wrote it Manuel Lisa. He was generally known by his first name, Manuel, or Mr. Manuel, and many did not know him by any other. He is said to have followed the sea when young and thence to have gained the title of captain by which he was frequently called. His name was at one time identified with many geographical features of the upper country, but now survives in one or two only. His signature may be seen opposite page 139. There is still in existence a portrait of Lisa in oil, now in possession of Mrs. Nathan Corwith, of Highland Park, Illinois.

Lisa's native tongue was Spanish, and he never acquired a fluent or correct use of either French or English. Letters in his own handwriting in either language are barbarously written. That given in the Appendix is taken from the *Missouri Gazette* and was edited pretty thoroughly by some friend or acquaintance before publication ; but the force and spirit of the composition clearly stamp it a genuine product of Lisa's vigorous mind.

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[6] This woman's name was Mitain, and she was seen by Maximilian, 1833.

Lisa was a Catholic, but evidently not a very punctilious follower of his church. He was married (the second time) by a Presbyterian clergyman, the well-known Salmon Giddings, to a daughter of a staunch member of the same church. His funeral services were conducted in the Catholic church, but he was buried in the private burying ground of the Hempsteads, now in the Protestant Bellefontaine cemetery.

The Lisa monument is a very satisfactory shaft and is still in a state of perfect preservation. The record of his life is on the southwest face over the word LISA, and that of his wife on the southeast face over the words AUNT MANUEL. There are also records of other members of the family on the remaining faces.

How much property Lisa left is not known, but his affairs were certainly much involved at the time of his death and the unencumbered residue of the estate was probably not large.

CHAPTER VI.

THE MISSOURI FUR COMPANY.

SKETCH OF ITS VARIED CAREER.

The first association — Contract for return of Mandan chief — Expedition of 1809 — Movement to the Three Forks of the Missouri — Attack by the Blackfeet — Death of Drouillard — Position at Three Forks untenable — Henry crosses the Divide — Fort Henry abandoned — Abandonment of entire upper country — Post at Cedar Island burned — Notes from Alexander Henry — Reorganization of the company — Defects of first association — Gloomy prospects of new company — War of 1812 — Revival of the trade after the war — Death of Lisa — Joshua Pilcher succeeds Lisa — Trade carried to upper Yellowstone — Jones and Immel sent to Three Forks — Meeting with the Blackfeet — Ambushed by the Blackfeet — Jones and Immel slain — Suspicion of British intrigue — Company withdraws from the trade of the upper river — Pilcher's tour of the Hudson Bay posts — Missouri Fur Company extinct — Biographical notes.

THE return of Lisa in the summer (probably August) of 1808 and the reports brought back concerning the resources of the upper country made a deep impression upon the St. Louis traders, and led to the formation of a trading company which included nearly all the prominent business men in the city. It was incorporated under the name of the St. Louis Missouri Fur Company, but was generally known as the Missouri Fur Company.[1] The members of the new company in the order in which their names appear in the record, were: Benjamin Wilkinson, Pierre Chouteau, Sr., Manuel Lisa, Auguste Chouteau, Jr., Reuben Lewis, William Clark, Sylvester Labadie, all of St. Louis; Pierre Menard and William Morrison, of Kaskaskia, Illinois; Andrew Henry, of Louisiana, Missouri, and Dennis Fitz Hugh, of Louisville, Kentucky.

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[1] This was a popular name for more than a quarter of a century and was applied to several differe[illegible]ssociations of St. Louis traders which succeeded each other in the [illegible] commerce of the Missouri. The first of these was formed at the suggestion of Zenon Trudeau, "governor of the western part of the Illinois," who on May 12, 1794, assembled the traders of St. Louis and advised the formation of a company not only

The articles of association prescribed in much detail the proposed methods of conducting the company's business, and defined the duties of the several partners. Lisa and Wilkinson were designated as the factors to trade with the Indians and General Clark was made the company's agent in St. Louis. No member was permitted to trade on his private account. The term during which the various associates were to reside in the Indian country without returning to St. Louis was fixed at three years, except that those members who were permitted first to return home could do so the following year. Pierre Chouteau, Manuel Lisa, and Pierre Menard were to be the first to enjoy this privilege; Benjamin Wilkinson and Auguste Chouteau the next. The new association bought out the stock and equipments of the late firm of Lisa, Menard and Morrison and likewise purchased their post at the mouth of the Bighorn river.

An important feature of the articles relates to a contract[2]

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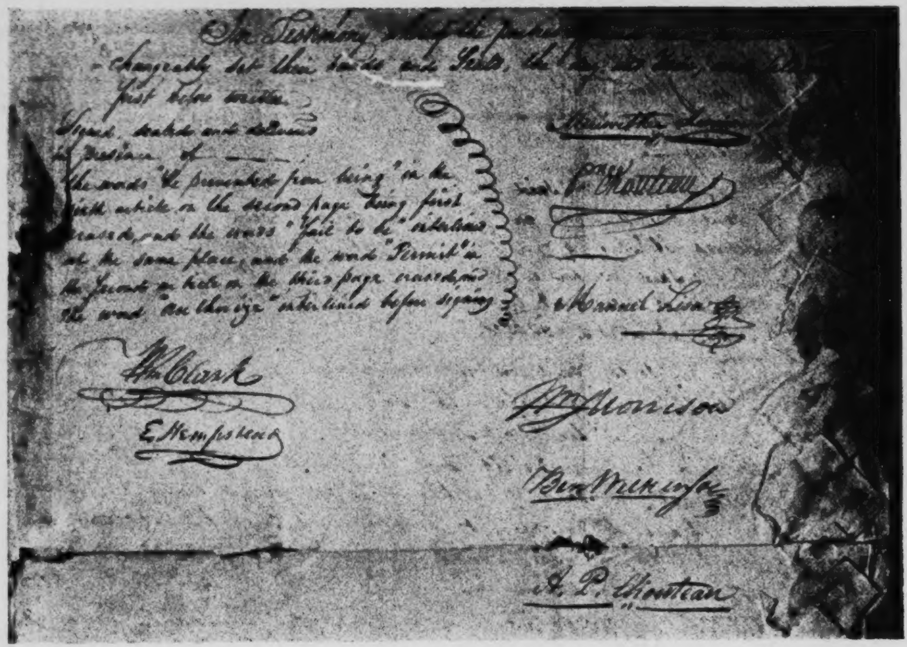
to control the trade of the Missouri, but to extend geographical and scientific knowledge as well. A company was formed accordingly, but it soon failed owing to the fraudulent conduct of one of its members.

Another firm of some prominence was founded in 1802 by Manuel Lisa, Francis M. Benoit, Gregoire Sarpy, and Charles Sanguinet. It continued only for a few years, when, in 1807, Lisa, Menard, and Morrison organized the company already described, which was soon merged with the St. Louis Missouri Fur Company.

The record of the Articles of Association of the St. Louis Missouri Fur Company may still be seen in Book B, p 373, in the recorder's office in the city of St. Louis.

[2] There is a singular discrepancy [illegible] the dates of these two instruments. The articles of association were signed May 9th, 1809, and the contract February 24th, although the latter refers to the former as already in existence.



In Testimony whereof the parties [illegible]
-changeably set their hands and Seals, the day and year [illegible]
first before written.

Signed, sealed and delivered
in presence of ——

The words "be prevented from being" in the sixth article on the second page being first erased, and the words "fail to be" interlined at the same place, and the word "Permit" in the seventh article on the third page erased, and the word "authorize" interlined before signing

Meriwether Lewis

P. Chouteau

Manuel Lisa

Wm Clark

E. Hempstead

Wm Morrison

Benj Wilkinson

A. P. Chouteau

SIGNATURES TO CONTRACT FOR RETURN OF MANDAN CHIEF between Governor Meriwether Lewis on the part of the United States and the members of the new company for transporting to his tribe the Mandan chief who had not yet gone home. The principal items in this interesting document were the following: The company agreed to engage one hundred and twenty-five men, of whom forty should be "Americans and expert riflemen," to constitute a body of militia of the territory of Missouri for the specific purpose of escorting the Mandan chief home, after which they were to be given their discharge. This force was to be suitably equipped with firearms of which there should be at least fifty rifles. The command of the escort was assigned to Pierre Chouteau, who had already given evidence of his determined spirit in the battle before the Aricara villages in 1807. The company was to provide suitable quarters on the boat for the chief, his wife, and child, the interpreter Jesseaume, his wife, and child, and two other interpreters. It bound itself to protect with its utmost power the chief and his party from all danger en route, and to report at once their safe arrival at the Mandan villages. It was also to transport the necessary presents to the Indians. The start from St. Louis was fixed for April 20, 1809, and might not be delayed beyond May 10th, under a penalty of three thousand dollars. The compensation agreed upon for this service was seven thousand dollars, one-half to be paid on the date of starting and the balance when a report was received of the satisfactory completion of the journey. Governor Lewis also agreed that before the departure of the expedition he would not license any other traders to ascend the Missouri higher than to the mouth of the Platte.

The Missouri Fur Company entered upon its career under the most auspicious circumstances. The *Louisiana Gazette* of March 8, 1809, referring to the new association, said: "It has every prospect of becoming a source of incalculable advantage not only to the individuals engaged but to the community at large. Their extensive preparations, and the extensive force with which they intend to ascend the Missouri, may bid defiance to any hostile force they may meet with. The streams which descend from the Rocky mountains afford the finest of hunting, and here, we learn, they intend to build their fort."

The company included the ablest traders of the west. Its field of operations embraced the whole watershed of the Missouri from the mouth of the Platte upward — a region known to abound in all the resources of the chase. Only one obstacle was feared and that was the hostility of the Indians. To meet this there was provided a force considered ample to repel any attacks, while it was hoped that a liberal extension of the trade would secure the friendship of the tribes. The capitalization of the company was not stated in the articles of association but it is understood to have been $40,000. The company felt so confident of success, and was so determined to close the door to all but its chosen few, that it provided in one of the articles that "no person shall hereafter be permitted to become a member of this company unless by the unanimous consent of every member."

The first expedition of the company numbered about one hundred and fifty men and carried sufficient merchandise to supply five or six posts and to equip as many smaller outfits as should be found desirable. The plan was to establish several posts along the river from the Sioux to the Minnetarees, but to take the main part of the expedition to Lisa's fort on the Yellowstone. It was expected to pass the first winter in that neighborhood and then to proceed in the following spring to the Three Forks of the Missouri, where the principal establishment was to be placed.

The expedition left St. Louis in the spring of 1809[3] and proceeded to its destination without serious mishap. The Sioux threatened trouble but were deterred from actual disturbance by the formidable appearance of the party. The Aricaras, who were passed September 12, were very hospitable. Doubtless this treacherous tribe understood from the strength of the party that it was expedient to put on the guise of friendship. The Mandan villages were passed September 24. Parties had been left to establish posts at Cedar Island among the Sioux, and at the Aricaras, Mandans, and Minnetarees. The main party then went on and arrived in due time, probably toward the end of October, at the mouth of the Bighorn river.

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[3] The date of the departure is not precisely known. By the terms of the contract for the return of the Mandan chief, the escort was to set out not later than May 10, under pain of forfeiture of $3,000. But the last ration return for the chief and his interpreters covers the period from February 1, 1809, to May 15, 1809, "the day of his departure," which would indicate that the contract time was exceeded. There is no

This portion of the expedition wintered in the Crow country, for it was too late in the year to establish a post at the Three Forks. A profitable trading and trapping campaign was carried on in the fall and winter, and early in the spring of 1810 a strong party, in which were at least two partners, Pierre Menard and Andrew Henry, set out for the Three Forks of the Missouri.[4] The temper of the Blackfeet was doubtful, and the party went prepared to exploit the resources of the country by means of their own trappers in case they did not succeed in opening a trade with the Indians.

Upon the arrival of the party at the Three Forks the erection of a post was promptly begun on the neck of land between the Jefferson and Madison rivers, about two miles above their confluence. In the meanwhile the trappers were dispersed to gather the resources of this rich beaver country. Fortune at first smiled upon them most encouragingly. It was evident that they were in the midst of vir-

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notice of the departure in the *Gazette*, but there is a notice of the return of messengers who were sent back from the Mandans to report the arrival of the expedition at that point. These messengers stated that the expedition arrived at its destination September 24, 101 days out from St. Louis, which would indicate June 15 as the day of departure. It is probable that the military escort set out first and that the trading expedition followed some weeks later.

[4] For an extended description of this remarkable spot see Part V., Chapter II.

gin territory unsurpassed in its wealth of beaver. The daily catch was heavy and the prospect was excellent that the company would take out from the Three Forks fully three hundred packs of beaver the first year.

In the midst of this sunshine of prosperity a black storm of disaster broke upon the unsuspecting company. It was the morning of the 12th of April and the trappers as usual had gone to examine their traps when a band of Blackfeet[5] came down upon them with the suddenness of a lightning flash. Before the least warning could be given five of the men were killed, and all their horses, guns, ammunition, traps, and furs were stolen. Only two of the Indians are known to have been killed. This most unfortunate affair spread gloom and discouragement throughout the camp, and it was with difficulty that the men could be induced to resume their work. It was necessary to adopt a different and much more expensive system by which a large proportion of the trappers were to remain at a central camp, while those tending the traps should keep closer together.

One of the great difficulties of the situation was to open any communication with the Blackfeet whereby peace might be sought. The Indians were so intensely hostile that there seemed to be no possibility of an interview except at the rifle's mouth. To get over this difficulty Pierre Menard proposed to make a visit to the Flathead and Snake Indians with a view of inducing them to join in a war upon the Blackfeet until they could obtain a prisoner. Him they would dispatch to his people with propositions of peace which it was thought could be obtained on condition of establishing a trading post on the Missouri below the Great Falls.[6] But before Menard could carry this ingenious scheme into effect, and only two days after he had written of it to St. Louis, the Blackfeet fell upon the party again. The result of this attack is not known, but it was evidently not such as to encourage Menard to remain in the country. He must have left within a month afterward, for he was back in St. Louis "a few days" before July 26, 1810.[7]

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[5] Grosventres of the Prairie. For an account of this tribe and why they were constantly confounded with the Blackfeet, see Part V., chapter IX.

[6] Letter from Pierre Menard to Pierre Chouteau, dated Three Forks of the Missouri, April 21, 1810. This most interesting and valuable document, sole surviving relic of the fort at the Three Forks of the Missouri, is given in Appendix A.

Before Menard started for St. Louis, however, another unfortunate encounter with the Blackfeet had taken place in which fell an important man for the company's service, George Drouillard, who has already been introduced in these pages. Early in May Drouillard with several Delaware Indians in the employ of the company went out to hunt, contrary to the advice of the rest of the party, who believed that Indians were prowling in the neighborhood. Their fears were quickly realized. Drouillard had not gone two miles when his party was ambushed by the Blackfeet[8] and himself and two of his companions killed. From the appearance of the scene of this attack it was apparent that Drouillard made a desperate defense. He seems to have used his horse as a breastwork, turning him so as to shield himself constantly from the enemy. It was but a short time until the horse was killed and he himself was the next victim. A most painful feature of this affair was that it took place within ordinary hearing distance of relief, but owing to a high wind prevailing at the time, the firing was not heard.

It was now apparent that the expectations of the company were not to be realized. Many of the hunters had resolved to leave, and it was decided that Pierre Menard should accompany them and take down the furs, about thirty packs, which had so far been collected. The rest of the party under the command of Andrew Henry remained at Three Forks.

From this time on the difficulties of the hunters increased.

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[7] See the *Louisiana Gazette* of this date.

[8] These were probably the band called the Blood Indians. See Part V., Chapter IX.

There seemed no possibility of negotiating with the Blackfeet who hung constantly in the neighborhood attacking every party over which they felt certain of having the advantage. The whole plan of operations of the company in that quarter was broken up. Trapping, which was profitable only when carried on in small detached parties, had to be suspended. Even with the utmost precaution it is said that between twenty and thirty men lost their lives. What transpired at this post during the rest of the season of 1810 we do not certainly know, except that, before the summer was over, a party of about twenty hunters met and repulsed an attack of about two hundred Blackfeet. The hunters made good their retreat with the loss of only one man, but claimed to have killed about twenty of the Indians.

The course of events during the summer made it evident that this post[9] would have to be given up. Not wishing to retire from the country altogether, Henry abandoned the position some time during the fall of 1810, moved south across the Continental Divide, and established himself on the north fork of Snake river, which has been known since that time as Henry Fork. One account states that in crossing the mountains he lost a part of his horses at the hands of the Crows. He built a temporary post consisting of a few log houses at a point near where the village of Egin, Idaho, now stands. This was the first trading post ever built in the valley of the Columbia or west of the Continental Divide.

In their new position the little band was scarcely more fortunate than in the one they had just left. They do not seem to have been molested by the Indians, but they found almost no game. A severe winter ensued, with deep snows and heavy spring rains, and the party could scarcely find means to keep themselves alive. They were compelled to subsist mainly on horse flesh. They succeeded, however. in securing some forty packs of beaver.

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[9] For a more extended reference to this post, see list of trading posts in Appendix F.

By the time the spring of 1811 had come the party were thoroughly dispirited and could no longer be held together. They separated into groups and set out in various directions, some toward the Spanish possessions, some east over the mountains, while Henry himself resolved to abandon the post and depart with the winter's returns for the lower river. Several of these bands of hunters will reappear in the course of this narrative. Some, no doubt, never again saw the frontier, but perished in the wilderness, yet such was the capacity for self-preservation possessed by these virile and hardy adventurers that most of them sooner or later found their way back.

It is not known by which of the two rivers, the Missouri or the Yellowstone, Henry made his descent in the spring of 1811, but probably by the Yellowstone; nor what, if any, remarkable adventure he experienced. Lisa ascended the river that spring to wait for him. He visited the Mandan villages, and then went back to the Aricaras, where he remained until he was joined by Henry some time after the middle of July.[10]

Thus ended in failure the project upon which the company had mainly relied. In the meanwhile the post at the Bighorn had been abandoned and the company had withdrawn all its parties from above the Mandans. This, however, was not the sum of the company's disasters. In the spring of 1810 Auguste Chouteau set out for St. Louis with the intention of taking down the furs that had been collected below the Mandans. Just before he reached Cedar Island the post at that point was burned with furs estimated to be worth fifteen thousand dollars. Add to these misfortunes the fact that furs were at this time bringing but little more than half their normal market price,[11] and the outlook for the company was discouraging enough. But in spite of these reverses, it is stated that the company arrived at the term of its existence without any loss and with a small profit, having saved its original capital in addition to such posts as were upon the upper rivers.[12]

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[10] For biographical sketch of Andrew Henry see Chapter XV. of this part.

[11] The price of beaver was about $2.50 per pound, as against a normal rate of $4.00 per pound.

Although the articles of association specified the full term of three years from March 9, 1809, as the period of the company's existence, a reorganization was effected on the 24th of January, 1812, and the property of the old company was sold on the 15th of the following month. The new company was made up from the members of the old, but did not include them all. The capital was fixed at fifty thousand dollars, of which twenty-seven thousand was accepted in funds and property of the late company, and the balance was raised by subscription.

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[12] Some interesting sidelights upon these events on the upper Missouri have come to light in the recently published journals of Alexander Henry. From them it appears that the Blackfeet robbed the whites of some beaver in 1808 and brought them to the British posts to trade. This probably refers to their attack on Colter and Potts. They undertook to repeat their tactics in 1809, but were not successful. Early in the spring of 1810 the Blackfeet were defeated by the Crows near Lisa's fort on the Yellowstone. The following extract relates to the affairs at the Three Forks in the summer of 1810: "While on a war excursion last summer these people [the Falls Indians or Gros Ventres of the Prairies] fell upon a party of Americans whom they confess that they murdered, and robbed of considerable booty in utensils, beaver skins, etc. Some of the beaver skins, I observed, were marked Valley and Jummell with different numbers—8, 15, etc. . . . . The Bloods were at war on the Missouri about the same time as the Falls Indians. They also fell upon a party of Americans, murdered them all, and brought away considerable booty in goods of various kinds, such as fine cotton shirts, beaver traps, hats, knives, dirks, handkerchiefs, Russia sheeting tents, and a number of bank notes, some signed New Jersey and Trenton Banking Company. From the description the Bloods gave of the dress and behavior of one whom they murdered, he must have been an officer or trader; they said he killed two Bloods before he fell. This exasperated them, and I have reason to suppose they butchered him in a horrible manner and then ate him partly raw, and partly boiled. They said his skin was exceedingly white and tattooed from the hips to the feet."

Valley and Jummell are Vallé and Immel, who were apparently free trappers in company with the main expedition. It is possible that the officer or trader referred to was Drouillard, whose tragic death has already been noticed.

In March, 1811, some Piegans reported that they had lately seen a fort on the Yellowstone "inhabited by white people." This would indicate that Lisa's fort was not abandoned until the spring of 1811, and that Henry went that way when he left Snake river and took the garrison and property along with him.

Looking back from this distance at the history of the St. Louis Missouri Fur Company, it is apparent that the primary cause of its failure was the top-heavy character of its organization. Capitalized at less than fifty thousand dollars, it embraced every trader of distinction in St. Louis, all of whom bore an active part in the administration of affairs either at home or in the field. It was not to be expected that such an arrangement could be as effective as if a single individual had controlled its management. Another error on the part of the St. Louis traders was their unwillingness to permit Mr. Astor to have any share in their business. They excluded the very man who would have been able to carry them through their initial misfortunes to ultimate success. The great confidence of the St. Louis merchants, and their determination to keep this new and rich field of enterprise to themselves, is well attested by the fact that the original company was a kind of close corporation into which admission was impossible, except by the unanimous consent of the members. Under the reorganization the door was in some degree opened to the public by giving the association the character of a joint stock company. But even then there was strenuous opposition to letting the stock get out of the hands of St. Louis parties, and a proposition to admit Mr. Astor to the extent of five shares was rejected.[18]

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[18] The following extract is from a letter from Charles Gratiot to John Jacob Astor, and throws some valuable light upon the workings of the St. Louis traders. It was written December 14, 1811. "I have been engaged for some time past in the settlement and dissolution of the Missouri Fur Company. I acted as agent for one of my relations who was absent. At the request of all the parties I was chosen to draw the articles for a new act of association, which I have made, but which will not be determined upon before next month. The capital of the present company with a moderate valuation is estimated at 30 thou-

The prospects of the new company were far from flattering. The threatening aspect of affairs, already in the shadow of approaching war, had its influence upon business even in the Far West. Communication with the East by way of New Orleans would soon be interrupted. All the Indian tribes within reach of British influence would most likely become disaffected towards Americans. The fur market would be cut off in large part and the price of furs would fall still further. On the whole the company would have been wise to have gone out of business altogether.

Notwithstanding this unfavorable outlook, an expedition was fitted out with eleven thousand dollars' worth of merchandise, and two boats were sent up the river under the personal charge, as usual, of Manuel Lisa. On the 27th of September the returns of the previous year's trade reached St. Louis, but fell short of expectation. The business of the following year was also unsatisfactory, and in the autumn of 1813 the board of directors issued another call for a meeting of the stockholders for the purpose of dissolving the company. Whether the company was actually dissolved, or only reorganized does not appear. It is only known that the business continued under a company of

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sand dollars, divided in ten equal shares. I have proposed to extend the ten shares to fifteen, which will give an additional sum of fifteen thousand dollars to the original stock; that an offer should be made to you of the five shares with proposition that you should contract to furnish on commission the equipments necessary for the trade of the upper Missouri, and to make the sales of the furs which would be received in return. This proposition has met with the approbation of some of the members, but I fear will be opposed by others. When I made this proposition I contemplated that you wished to draw the fur trade into your hands. In this view I considered that you would be of great service to each other, or likewise the measure might facilitate the operations of Mr. Hunt, as you could by that means have a communication open from this place to the Columbia."

We shall again have occasion to refer to the far-sighted suggestion with which this extract closes. Had the counsels of Charles Gratiot prevailed, the course of the American fur trade would have been quite different from what it was.

which Lisa was the principal member and from which most of the old members were now absent.

The operations of the fur trade are almost wholly devoid of interest during the next six years. The War of 1812 absorbed the energies and attention of the people, and Lisa seems to have been the only active trader on the Missouri. The company was commonly spoken of as "Manuel Lisa and Company," and all contemporary references to the fur trade are simply accounts of Lisa's operations. The organization underwent further changes in 1814 and again in 1817, but what they were is not known.

It was during the War of 1812 and possibly as a consequence of it that Lisa withdrew his establishments from the upper river and concentrated them at Council Bluffs, where he built his noted trading post of Fort Lisa. Here he spent the greater part of his time for several years and evidently maintained an important establishment. As affairs began to assume a normal aspect after the war he gradually extended his operations up the river as far as to the Mandans. His trade attained considerable magnitude, to judge from notices of the annual arrival of his furs in St. Louis, in which a cargo worth thirty-five thousand dollars is once mentioned and others are referred to as valuable. Business had so far revived by 1818 that Lisa began to consider again the question of attempting to establish a trade at the headwaters of the Missouri and even beyond the Rocky Mountains.

In 1819 the company underwent another reorganization, the last with which Lisa was connected. The members were Manuel Lisa, president, Thomas Hempstead, Joshua Pilcher, Joseph Perkins, Andrew Woods, Moses Carson, John B. Zenoni, Andrew Drips, and Robert Jones — not a name of those who founded the original company ten years before except that of Lisa, but in their place several new names destined to prominence in the fur trade. This was the year of the celebrated Yellowstone expedition.[14]

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[14] See Part III., Chapter II.

Lisa's career was now drawing to a close. He was taken ill about August 1, 1820, in St. Louis, and died there on the 12th of that month. In his death the Missouri Fur Company lost its chief spirit, and itself survived only a few years longer.[15]

After Lisa's death Joshua Pilcher succeeded to the management of the company. He was a worthy successor to the great trader, possessing his breadth of view, his tireless energy, and being withal a man of upright character and high standing among his fellows. He proceeded at once to develop the project which Lisa had formed, of carrying the trade to the upper rivers, and his first attempts were fairly successful. In the fall of 1821 he established a post named Fort Benton at the mouth of the Bighorn river, the site of the last, as it had been of the first, post built by the Missouri Fur Company. In the spring of 1822 a large expedition under Jones and Immel, consisting of "180 adventurers," left St. Charles for the upper river. The company had now about three hundred men in the mountains, and their operations were meeting with good results. In the fall of 1822 about twenty-five thousand dollars' worth of furs was sent to St. Louis. A Missouri paper referred to this expedition as the "first adventure to the Rocky

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[15] Lisa's death occurred on the eve of the real revival of the St. Louis fur trade. The following list of companies doing business on the Missouri in 1819 will show the condition of the trade at that time:

The Missouri Fur Company, capital $17,000; traded with Pawnees, Omahas, Otoes, Sioux and Iowas; principal establishment at Ft. Lisa, Council Bluffs.

Cerre and Francis Chouteau, capital $4,000; traded with Osages and Kansas; trading house at mouth of Kansas.

Other traders by the name of Chouteau traded principally with the Osages, having a capital of about $6,000.

Robidoux and Papin, in company with Chouteau and Berthold, capital $12,000; traded with the same tribes as did the Missouri Fur Company. Their principal establishment was at Nishnabotna.

Pratte and Vasquez; capital $7,000; traded with the same tribes; house near the Omaha village.

It will be seen that, while the first of these companies is evidently the most important, none of them were doing a large business.

Mountains" since the revival of the fur trade. At this time the prospect was good that the Missouri Fur Company would reap the rich harvest which fell to the Rocky Mountain Fur Company a few years later. But the same fatality which destroyed the hopes of the first Missouri Fur Company in that region was destined soon to destroy the prospects of the last.

Early in the spring of 1823 Jones and Immel set out from Fort Benton with a large party for the upper Missouri, to carry out Pilcher's plan of opening up a trade with the Blackfeet. Their instructions were to "use every effort to obtain a friendly interview with the Blackfeet, to incur any reasonable expense for the accomplishment of that object, and to impress them with the friendly disposition of American citizens toward them, and with the true object of their visiting the country." The party reached the Three Forks of the Missouri in due time, and remained there until the middle of May, meanwhile trapping the Jefferson Fork nearly to its source. They were somewhat disappointed in their hunt, for they found that the Blackfeet had industriously trapped these streams during the past ten years. They succeeded, however, in securing over thirty packs, which, with their hunt in other sections, made fifty-two packs in all. Finally, May 16, they resolved to return to the Yellowstone, not having come across any Indians; but on the following day, while descending Jefferson Fork, they met a party of thirty-eight Blackfeet. With much precaution they were permitted to approach, when one of them exhibited a letter which was written on the leaf of a notebook, with "Mountain Park, 1823," on the top of the leaf, and the date "1820" on the bottom. It was superscribed "God save the King," and its substance was a recommendation of the bearer as a principal chief of his nation, well disposed toward the whites, and in possession of a quantity of furs. The Indians remained all night with the party, were very friendly, seemed to be greatly pleased at the proposition to establish a post below the Great Falls of the

Missouri, and departed next day with many professions of friendship.

But Immel and Jones did not permit these friendly appearances to throw them off their guard. They knew the treacherous character of the tribe and resolved to make quick work in getting out of the country. They reached the Yellowstone in safety, descended it for a considerable distance, and having practically gotten into the Crow territory, felt themselves comparatively safe. In the meanwhile the band of Blackfeet whom they had left on the Missouri promptly notified others of their tribe, and having increased their number to about four hundred, set out on the track of the whites. They moved down the Yellowstone, got ahead of the whites, and selected a natural position of great advantage for the purposes of ambush.[16]

The whites had been very watchful, particularly at night, but made a mistake in not having any flankers out while on the march. At this point there was a steep hill, washed by the river at its base, along which the only track was an intricate buffalo trail, winding among the rocks and trees and so narrow that the party had to pass in single file. On the slope of the hill the Blackfeet had concealed themselves for the purpose of attacking the party as soon as they became completely entangled in the defile. Besides Immel and Jones, we have the names of two others of the unfortunate party, William Gordon and a Mr. Keemle. Gordon had the good fortune to be sent on ahead that day to hunt, and passed the defile in advance of the main party, the Indians permitting him to pass lest they should alarm the rest of the party, if they attacked him. This threw the party still more off their guard, for they were close upon Gordon's trail, who, they might reasonably assume, would give the alarm in case of danger.

[16] The site of this battle ground is not definitely known. Lieut. Bradley thought that it was near what is now known as Bridger Creek, but it was evidently far below that. From the fact that the party had traveled two weeks from Jefferson Fork and were within ten miles of the Crow village when they were attacked, and that they reached the

It was on the last day of May, 1823, that the party, twenty-nine in number, arrived at the fatal defile and immediately commenced its passage. "The Indians did not show themselves until the rear of the party had entered the pass, when they rushed furiously upon them from every rock and bush. Knowing Immel and Jones, their chief aim was first to kill them. An Indian, supposed to be one of their principals, rushed boldly upon Immel, covering himself with his shield. Immel, by a well-directed shot, brought him down. His gun was hardly empty when he was literally cut to pieces. About thirty Indians fired and rushed upon him at the same instant and immediately after gave way.

"Jones seized the moment, and although he had received two severe wounds, rallied and assembled his men, and collected the scattered horses, and was pressing forward with some prospect of success to pass the defile and gain the river plain when the Indians rushed upon them with great fury. They attacked the whites with lances, battle axes, scalping knives and every weapon used by Indians. Jones, pierced on every side, fell. . . Nothing but defeat under such circumstances could be looked for and how so many of them escaped is indeed wonderful."[17]

The party lost nearly all their property, including horses, traps and some thirty-five packs of beaver, the total loss being estimated at fifteen thousand dollars. Of the party the two leaders and five men were killed and four wounded. The rest, under the leadership of Mr. Keemle, succeeded, almost by miracle, in constructing a raft and getting across the river. They reached the Crow village near the mouth of Pryor Fork the same day. Mr. Gordon with one man here left the party and proceeded to Fort Vanderburgh, the

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Crow village after the attack, the same day, and found it near Pryor Fork of the Yellowstone river, it must be concluded that the scene of the disaster was not far above the mouth of Pryor Fork, probably in the vicinity of the mouth of Canon Creek, near Canon Station on the Northern Pacific railroad.

[17] Letter from Joshua Pilcher to Thomas Hempstead, dated September 30, 1823.

Mandan post, where he arrived June 15, and wrote to Mr. Pilcher of the disaster. Mr. Keemle constructed enough bull-boats to transport the party, raised the cache of beaver which had been their fall hunt in the Crow country, and made his way safely to Fort Vanderburgh.

This disaster was a terrible blow to the Missouri Fur Company, and to the hopes of Mr. Pilcher. His conduct of the company's affairs had so far been very successful. He said in a letter to Major Benjamin O'Fallon, dated Fort Recovery, Upper Missouri, July 23, 1823: "This our second adventure to the mountains, had surpassed my most sanguine expectations; success was complete and my views were fulfilled in every respect." We can readily understand the prostration of spirit in which he added: "The flower of my business is gone; my mountaineers have been defeated, and the chiefs of the party both slain."

Rightly or wrongly, the Missouri traders attributed these acts of persistent hostility on the part of the Indians to the instigation of the British traders. It was about the same time that Ashley was attacked by the Aricaras and several of his men killed, while Henry's party near the mouth of the Yellowstone suffered a similar though less disastrous experience. It seemed impossible that these Indians would of their own free will maintain an attitude of such uncompromising hostility. Indignation at repeated outrages may have made the American traders unduly suspicious of the British. Whether these suspicions were well founded or not, it was a fact that the firearms with which the Indians attacked the traders came from across the line, and the furs which they took from our people quickly found their way back there in payment.[18]

[18] How deep was the suspicion of British intrigue in all these matters may be seen from the following extract from a letter by Major O'Fallon to General Atkinson, dated July 3, 1823: "I was in hopes that the British Indian Traders had some bounds to their rapacity. I was in hopes, during the late Indian War, in which they were so instrumental in the indiscriminate massacre of our people, that they were completely saturated with our blood. But it appears not to have been

The result of this disaster and similar ones to Ashley and Henry's parties induced Pilcher to withdraw from the trade altogether above the Omahas. He took part in the campaign against the Aricaras with Colonel Leavenworth in the following August and September,[19] and then retired to his main establishment at Council Bluffs.

The company continued to do business for several years under Pilcher's direction and was commonly referred to as Pilcher and Company. It probably operated to some extent in the mountain country, for Pilcher has left the statement that he had several times crossed South Pass. Be that as it may the further operations of the company were of little importance and attracted no attention at the time. The growing power of the Western Department of the American Fur Company and of the Rocky Mountain Fur Company was gradually restricting its activities, and it finally passed out of existence altogether. The termination of its career was marked by a rather unusual event in which the moribund company was gracefully bowed off the stage of western history.

In September, 1827, Mr. Pilcher and a party of forty-five men left Council Bluffs for Salt Lake Valley with a complete outfit of merchandise and over one hundred horses. The fame of Ashley's exploits in these regions was now at its height and apparently it was Pilcher's purpose to obtain a share of the wealth of that country. He took the usual

the case. Like the greedy wolf, not satisfied with the flesh, they quarrel over the bones. They ravage our fields and are unwilling that we should glean them. . . . Alarmed at the individual enterprise of our people, they are exciting the Indians against them. They furnish them with . . . the instruments of death and a passport to our bosoms. Immel had great experience of the Indian character, but (poor fellow!) with a British passport they at last deceived him and he fell a victim to his own credulity; and his scalp, and those of his comrades, are now bleeding on their way to the British trading establishments."

The authorities mainly relied upon in the above narrative are *American State Papers*, Indian Affairs, vol. II., p. 451 et seq., and Military Affairs, vol. II., p. 578 et seq.; Senate Executive Document 39, 21st Congress, 2d Session.

[19] See Chapter III., Part III.

route via the Platte and Sweetwater rivers. In the neighborhood of South Pass Pilcher's horses were all stolen and he was compelled to cache his merchandise. He then went on to Green river, where he spent the following winter. In the spring of 1828 he sent a partner back to the cache for the goods, but they were found to have been nearly ruined by water. The remnant saved was taken to Bear Lake, "then a rendezvous for hunters and traders." After completing the trade, Pilcher's partners and most of the men returned to Council Bluffs, while Pilcher himself, with nine men, "commenced a tour to the northwest with a view of exploring the region of the Columbia river, to ascertain its attractions and capabilities for trade."

It was late in July, 1828, when he set out. His course was northwesterly and he stopped for the winter at Flathead Lake. In February, 1829, he resumed his journey north, but had not gone far when his horses were stolen. Soon after he fell in with some men belonging to one of the St. Louis traders. His own men becoming disheartened, he discharged all except one, with whom he set out, in company with a British trader, for Fort Colville on the Columbia. He arrived at this post September 1, 1829. Being offered the protection of the Hudson Bay Company express for the east, he accepted and left Fort Colville on the 21st of September, in company with six men. He arrived at Boat Encampment (so called as being the place where the boats are abandoned preparatory to the passage of the mountains) October 4th, and remained there until November 2d, when the express from the east arrived. The party left Boat Encampment November 4th, arrived at the Jasper House on the Athabasca, November 11th, and left there December 17th, equipped with dog sleds and snow shoes. On the first day of January, 1830, they arrived at Fort Assiniboine. Setting out from this point on the 4th they reached Edmonton House, or Fort de Prairie, on the north fork of the Saskatchewan, in a few days more.[20]

[20] This post is of particular interest, not only as being one of the

Pilcher left Fort de Prairie January 15th, and passing Fort Pitt, arrived at Carlton House on the 1st of February. Continuing his journey after eleven days' rest he arrived at the Cumberland House the 24th of the same month, and at Moose Lake March 1st. He then set out for Selkirk's settlement in the Red River valley, where he arrived March 26th. Leaving that place on the 29th, and proceeding up the Assiniboine river, he reached Brandon House April 4th. The next day he set out with a half-breed Indian for the Mandan villages on the Missouri, where he arrived on the 22d of April. Here he found Mr. Sanford, Indian subagent for the upper Missouri, Daniel Lamont, agent for the American Fur Company, and the German traveler, Prince Paul of Wurtemburg, who was now on his second visit of exploration to the interior of North America. Mr. Pilcher arrived in St. Louis in June, 1830.

His long expedition had given him an acquaintance with the British posts such as at that time was possessed by no other American. He was treated by the Hudson Bay traders with the hospitality so well understood by that company, but which, when dispensed to rival traders, was always accompanied with a firm refusal to assist in any way in their trading operations.

It is about at the time of Pilcher's return to St. Louis that he refers to himself as being no longer in the fur trade, and we may count the Missouri Fur Company as now finally extinct. There seems to be no evidence that it was ever bought out by another company. It had an existence under one style or another for over twenty-five years and was the most important company that did business from St. Louis in the first quarter of the century.

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most important of the Hudson Bay Company posts, and the distributing point for the trade of a large section of country at the eastern base of the mountains, but it was the post at which the Blackfeet traded. Even the British found this tribe a troublesome one to deal with, and their post at this point was unusually strong. Pilcher says that it was a "strong stockade, with six bastions, and ten or twelve pieces of small ordnance."

Biographical Notes: Joshua Pilcher was born at Culpeper, Virginia, March 15, 1790; came to St. Louis during War of 1812; was a hatter by occupation, but was engaged in other pursuits as well; is mentioned in 1817 as one of the directors of the Bank of St. Louis. In 1819 he entered the fur trade as a member of the Missouri Fur Company, of which he became president upon the death of Manuel Lisa. He remained at the head of the company until its final dissolution between 1828 and 1830. Entered the service of the American Fur Company in charge of its affairs near Council Bluffs, and remained there about two years. In 1838 he succeeded General Clark as superintendent of Indian Affairs at St. Louis and held the position until his death, June 5, 1847.

Pilcher is represented as a man of good ability, strict integrity of character, and high standing in business and social circles.

Jones and Immel. These two names are almost always seen together, for the reason that about all that is known of them is their connection with the expedition which ended in their tragic death on the Yellowstone in 1823. Benjamin O'Fallon thus refers to them in a letter to General Clark, dated July 7, 1823: "Jones [Robert] was a gentleman of cleverness and for many years a resident of St. Louis. . . . Immel [Michael?] has been a long time on the river; formerly an officer in the U. S. A.; since then an Indian trader of some distinction. In some respects he was an extraordinary man. He was brave, uncommonly large, and of great muscular strength. When timely apprised of danger, he was a host in himself." This may be the same Immel who was associated with Vallé as a free hunter on the upper Missouri in 1810.

CHAPTER VII.

CROOKS AND McLELLAN.

Robert McLellan — Crooks and McLellan form a partnership — Turned back by the Sioux in 1809 — Manuel Lisa charged with bad faith — Crooks and McLellan join Pacific Fur Company — Death of McLellan.

A SMALL trading company occasionally noticed in the annals of the time was that of Ramsay Crooks[1] and Robert McLellan, who prosecuted a trade on the Missouri from 1807 to 1811. Crooks had come to America from Scotland in 1803 and had drifted to St. Louis within the next three years, where he saw and studied the new field of enterprise which the valley of the Missouri offered. Here he met a man suited to his temper and ready to embark in any undertaking that promised ordinary chances of success. This was Robert McLellan, one of the most romantic characters in the annals of the Western fur trade. He was a man of many perilous exploits and hairbreadth escapes, a sure shot, a daring hunter, and altogether a superb example of frontier manhood. He had greatly distinguished himself in the early Indian wars under General Wayne in Ohio, and was already a comparatively old man when he crossed the Mississippi to penetrate the newly acquired wilderness of Louisiana. He entered the trade of the Missouri immediately after the transfer of Louisiana. In the winter of 1805 he was trading with the Omahas and he told Lewis and Clark the following summer that he was opposed in this trade by Joseph Le Croix, a British trader — so far did those daring adventurers of the Northwest Company push their operations into foreign territory. McLellan complained that this competition compelled him to sell his merchandise at an actual loss, but that he determined to hold out in the hope that such interlopers would soon be driven from the field.

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[1] A biographical sketch of this able trader is given in Chapter XXIII. of this part.

It seems to have been in 1807 that McLellan met Crooks and formed a partnership with him. They made up an expedition of eighty men, and, with an outfit advanced on shares *(de moitié)* by Sylvester and Auguste Chouteau, they set out for the upper river in the fall of that year. On their way they met Ensign Pryor returning to St. Louis with the Mandan chief after his defeat by the Aricaras. The report which Pryor brought of the hostile attitude of the Sioux and Aricaras caused Crooks and McLellan to turn back. They established themselves near Council Bluffs and remained there until the spring of 1809.

When they saw the expedition of the Missouri Fur Company ascend the river in the summer of that year they decided to follow. With about forty men they set out up the river, but ill-luck attended their enterprises. While passing the country of the Sioux, a band of these Indians, some six hundred strong, appeared upon a high bank in a concave bend of the river and ordered the boats to turn about and land farther down stream. The number of the Indians was such as to make it out of the question to resist their commands, and Crooks and McLellan, with feigned willingness, turned about. They had an interview with the Sioux, who absolutely forbade them to proceed, but agreed to trade peaceably with them should they remain where they were.

The party was not strong enough to defy the Sioux, and they accordingly had no alternative but to open trade at that point. Making a virtue of necessity they set about erecting a post with every appearance of good faith. Meanwhile most of the Indians went to their village some twenty miles away to procure articles for trade, leaving only a small guard behind. Crooks and McLellan took advantage of this absence to carry out in part the purpose of their expedition and also to revenge themselves upon the Indians. They clandestinely sent a party of hunters and trappers up the river in a canoe with directions to collect such furs as they could and to await favorable opportunities to return. As soon as this detachment was thought to be well beyond the hostile country, the partners broke up their trading establishment very suddenly, left a message for the Indians not calculated to mollify their feelings, and themselves made their way to their old establishment down the river.

Crooks and McLellan always claimed that this miscarriage of their plans was due to the machinations of the St. Louis Missouri Fur Company, whose active agent in accomplishing it was Manuel Lisa. They asserted that Lisa, in order to facilitate his own passage through this hostile country, had told the Sioux that another expedition was on its way with the express purpose of trading with them, and that they must not permit it to pass. This may or may not have been true. Certainly the character of the traders, and the measures often resorted to in their competition are quite in keeping with such a course; but of direct evidence there is none. Even if it were true, the motive was probably not so much to secure a free passage to the Missouri Fur Company, for they had force enough to secure that, as to prevent competition in the upper country. There is moreover some question as to the right of Crooks and McLellan to ascend the river at this time. The contract for the return of the Mandan chief expressly stipulated that Governor Lewis should not, before the departure of the expedition, license any other traders to ascend the Missouri river above the mouth of the Platte. Crooks and McLellan could not have had any such license, therefore, unless they got it after the departure of the expedition, for the licenses to trade were generally renewed every year.

There is likewise no evidence that these gentlemen revealed their plans to Lisa when he passed up, although that wily trader would doubtless have found them out if such plans were then in contemplation. There was no adequate reason, except personal pique and disappointment of expected gains, to justify this extreme bitterness against Lisa. Certainly there was nothing in Lisa's action which partook so much of the lawlessness of the wilderness as did the plans of McLellan for getting even with him; for he declared repeatedly, with a manner that left little doubt of his sincerity, that if he ever caught Lisa in that part of the country he would shoot him on the spot. How he did so meet him, and how he failed to carry out his threat, will be told in our account of the Astorian expedition.

Disappointed again in their efforts to ascend the river, Crooks and McLellan returned to their post near Council Bluffs. There is some evidence that they made an ineffectual attempt to establish a trade above the Aricaras in 1810, but it is not conclusive. In the winter of 1810-11 both gentlemen entered the Pacific Fur Company and joined the overland Astorian expedition under W. P. Hunt. Their own partnership thus came to an end with the year 1810.

The further careers of these two traders were identified with the Pacific and American Fur Companies. After the return of McLellan to St. Louis in the spring of 1813 he quite disappears from public notice. The only authentic reference to him after this time that has come to light is a notice in a St. Louis paper, dated March 15, 1816, of the administration of his estate. He therefore probably died in St. Louis, although one account of his life says that it was near the Omaha village on the Missouri and another that it was at St. Genevieve.

CHAPTER VIII.

ASTORIA.

ORIGIN AND SCOPE OF THE PROJECT.

John Jacob Astor — His early operations — The Louisiana Purchase — The American Fur Company chartered — General plan of operations — Organization of the Pacific Fur Company.

REFERENCE has already been made to the fact that in the earlier years of United States history there was no systematic conduct of its fur trade and no recognized American Fur Company, and allusion was made to those obstacles, notably the possession of the frontier posts by the British, which for many years deterred private enterprise from embarking in that direction. It was not until the final evacuation of these posts that the time was ripe for the commencement of a distinctively American enterprise of this sort.

The opportunity, when it came, was seized upon, not, as might have been expected, by some native-born American, but by a foreigner who had made America his home and was just emerging into prominence in the commercial world. John Jacob Astor, although an alien by birth, is one of America's best examples of self-made men — men of humble beginnings, who, by sheer native ability, have risen to the foremost rank in their respective callings. He easily stands at the head of that ever-expanding roll of financial geniuses which America has produced, for although his operations, measured by their magnitude alone, have been exceeded in later times, the greater difficulties with which he had to contend make them the most extraordinary of any in the commercial history of the United States.

Astor was born July 17, 1763, in the village of Waldorf near Heidelburg, in the Duchy of Baden, Germany. At the age of sixteen or seventeen he went to London and engaged with an elder brother, who had already established a business there, in the manufacture and sale of musical instruments. After two or three years in London he determined to see if he could not better his fortunes by crossing the Atlantic. He sailed in November, 1783, taking with him a small stock of instruments, the proceeds of which would be his only capital to begin life with in the new world. His ship reached the mouth of the Chesapeake en route for Baltimore in January, 1784, but was detained in the bay by ice until the following March. During the tedious period of waiting he had the good luck to fall in with a fur dealer, who gave him much information and advised him to go to New York with his goods and invest the proceeds of the sale in furs. This Astor did, and having further informed himself as to the conditions and prospects of that line of business, he sailed for London with his furs in the early summer. He disposed of them to advantage, gathered full information regarding the fur markets of Europe, and returned to New York before the end of 1784, having definitely resolved to make America his home and the fur trade his business.[1]

Astor's career as a fur merchant began in 1784. His extraordinary judgment of commercial conditions, and his remarkable foresight, told him from the first that the fur business had a great future in store for him. Even his brief investigation of a few months on the occasion of his first visit to America, led him to predict, on his return to London, that "when the [Canadian] frontiers are surrendered I will make my fortune in the fur trade." His grasp of the situation in so short a time is no less remarkable than his confidence in his own powers, which led him, on more than one occasion, to predict his future great wealth. With the full courage of his convictions he embarked in the fur trade immediately upon his return from London and worked himself up by rapid steps until by the end of the century he had become the leading fur merchant of the United States and probably the leading authority in the world upon that business. His reputation had reached beyond the frontier of his adopted country and the magnates of the fur trade in Montreal and St. Louis recognized in him a formidable competitor.[2] Astor had at this time amassed a fortune of perhaps half a million dollars, had become a ship owner, and had formed commercial relations with the uttermost parts of the earth. It was a great achievement for a man of his years, and for the period in which he lived, and it demonstrated his ability to grapple with the highest problems which the commercial world at that time presented. Such problems were soon to confront him.

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[1] Astor's subsequent connection with the fur trade is mostly given in the following pages. In his other business and public relations his career is well known. He became one of America's wealthiest men, one of her most progressive citizens, and before his death was well known throughout the world. He died March 29, 1848.

Astor's early operations were largely conducted at Montreal, on account of the restrictions of the existing tariff. He frequently visited that city, even going to the trading posts of the interior, and thus familiarizing himself with the details of his business in all its bearings. As the commercial relations between Great Britain and the United States began to assume a more favorable aspect, and the tariff laws of the latter country became less stringent in the article of fine furs, he was able to extend his business further north along the shore of the lakes, and at the same time to conduct it more from New York as a primary base of operations. The course of political affairs was working his way as the power of his own government became more firmly established. The purchase of Louisiana opened up an entirely new vista of almost illimitable scope. St. Louis thereby became an American city and all the country of which it was the emporium United States territory. What the extent of the new acquisition was, was not definitely known, except that it was very great. Certainly it included the immense watershed of the Missouri, and it was generally considered that, if the Purchase itself did not extend through to the Pacific, the right of discovery gave America a first claim there. The expedition of Lewis and Clark had shown that this new country abounded in furs, and thus the business field in which Mr. Astor had chosen to exercise his powers was at a single stroke trebled in extent. More than this, if the mouth of the Columbia were now, as he evidently thought, American territory, the commerce of the Orient, that great market for rich furs, was brought practically to his own door.

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[2] In a letter dated at St. Louis April 29, 1800, addressed to Astor, the writer, Charles Gratiot, said: "You are beyond question the greatest of the fur merchants. Your relations at home and abroad give you facilities which no other house in the United States possesses. You are established in the most active city upon the globe today, where everything is to be found from all parts of the world, etc."

Mr. Astor was not slow to grasp the magnitude of this new and unexpected development. With China a market for furs from the Pacific coast, with Russian establishments on the northwest coast which his ships might supply as an incident to their main business, with markets at home for the products of the Orient, with lines of trading posts along the Columbia from the sea to its source, connected thence with the Missouri, and extending down that stream to St. Louis, and from that point by way of the Great Lakes to New York itself, Mr. Astor saw that his business would indeed be world-wide in scope and international in importance.

In exploiting his schemes of commercial conquest Mr. Astor was early led to entertain views regarding the expansion of American territory altogether in advance of those of our own statesmen. He believed not only in the desirability but the practicability of our taking possession of the whole Pacific coast from the Spanish to the Russian possessions, and he clearly saw in that distant region the germ of a mighty future empire. He took the only view which a man accustomed to look at things on a broad scale, yet in a plain, matter-of-fact way, could take, that it would be better for this territory to be in the possession of a single power than to be parceled out among several. There can be no doubt as to what power Mr. Astor thought that this should be.

His projects of commerce led him into relations with his government which, it seems, heartily applauded his views, but could lend him no other aid than tacit encouragement. It is ever to be lamented that President Madison did not see his way to adopt as bold a course in regard to Mr. Astor's enterprise as did his illustrious predecessor in office in regard to the purchase of Louisiana. Had he done so the political map of North America would not be what it is today.

The greatness of Mr. Astor's powers is nowhere better shown than in his unhesitating determination to carry out his schemes even without any direct aid from the government. In the year 1808, April 6th, he secured a charter from the state of New York creating the *American* Fur Company. It was the first time that this distinctive national name had been stamped upon the great business of the fur trade — a business peculiarly identified throughout American history with colonial development and expansion. It does not appear that the company was formed with a view to any specific trade, but was rather a general title to include all of Mr. Astor's operations.[8]

Assured of the approval of the government, Mr. Astor proceeded to elaborate his plans. The general scheme contemplated a central establishment near the mouth of the Columbia, from which the trade was to be prosecuted in all directions in the interior. The supplies for the establishment were to be sent out from New York in an annual ship, which would receive the returns of the trade, dispose of the furs in China, and return home with goods for the home market. In conjunction with this trade Mr. Astor would also prosecute the coast trade from his vessels, and would endeavor to secure the privilege of supplying the Russian establishments farther north. He saw how great would be his advantage, once thoroughly established on the coast, over his competitors, the Northwest Company, should they extend their trade in that direction. Their line of supply overland across the continent from Montreal would be much longer than that which he might establish from St. Louis with a single river leading more than half the way. The Northwesters could not compete with him in the ocean business, for the British East India Company monopolized that trade. Everything indicated that the plan was feasible and it may be said, after a lapse of ninety years, that nothing has come to light to show that it was not so.

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[8] W. W. Astor, in a magazine article upon his illustrious ancestor, says that this corporate body was simply a "fiction intended to broaden and facilitate his operations." The date of the charter has nearly always heretofore been given as 1809.

Having fixed upon his general plan, Mr. Astor proceeded to organize his company and fit out his expeditions. As a name to cover this particular enterprise he chose "Pacific Fur Company," but it was in reality only the American Fur Company with a special name applied to a special locality. His long acquaintance and familiarity with the Canadian trade turned his mind in that direction as the best field for recruits trained in the business. He even hoped to signalize the commencement of his undertaking by a masterstroke which should forestall competition in the future. He proposed to the Northwest Company to join him. His offers were alluring, but the managers of that concern did not look with favor upon the alliance, and moreover resolved to anticipate him in his own plans. They declined his offer, but forthwith commenced preparations for a descent upon the Columbia.

A union with the Northwest Company being impossible, Mr. Astor nevertheless organized his company largely from Northwest men. This matter will be referred to later on, in order to trace its influence upon the outcome of the enterprise, but for the present it need only be stated that a large part of the rank and file of the company were subjects of

Great Britain, with which nation the United States was then on the verge of war.

The articles of agreement of the Pacific Fur Company were signed on the 23d of June, 1810. Mr. Astor was to be the head of the company, to furnish the means, not to exceed, however, an advance of four hundred thousand dollars, and to bear all losses for the period of five years. Of the hundred shares into which the stock was to be divided, Mr. Astor was to hold fifty and the associates fifty. The company was to hold its annual general meeting at the central establishment on the Columbia, at which absent members were to be represented by proxy. The term of the association was fixed at twenty years, with the privilege of dissolving it within the first five years if found unprofitable. An agent of the company was to reside at the principal establishment on the Columbia for a period of five years.

The company in the course of its career included the following persons: Mr. Astor, president and principal stockholder; Wilson Price Hunt, of New Jersey, partner and first resident agent; Alexander McKay, Duncan McDougal, Donald McKenzie, Ramsay Crooks, Robert McLellan, Joseph Miller, David Stuart, Robert Stuart, John Clarke, partners. There were in addition some eighteen clerks, and the necessary complement of voyageurs, hunters, and engagés, comprising upwards of one hundred and forty men.

In commencing to carry out his scheme, Mr. Astor organized two expeditions, one to go by sea and the other by land along the route of Lewis and Clark. The first vessel was to stop at the mouth of the Columbia and leave there such material and passengers as were designed for the establishment at that point, and then she was to pursue Mr. Astor's further business along the coast, returning to the Columbia for such furs as might be collected there. The overland expedition would at the same time proceed across the continent and, if things went well, reach the Columbia not much later than the ship.

Mr. Astor's comprehensive mind had arranged a multitude of details, and among them one which shows the high authority of his name at this time throughout the world. He made application to the Russian government for permission to prosecute his purpose of trade with the Russian posts on the northwest coast. His request was granted and he thus entered upon his undertaking with the expressed sanction of two interested governments.

CHAPTER IX.

ASTORIA.

THE EXPEDITION BY SEA.

The *Tonquin* — Voyage of the *Tonquin* — Misunderstandings with Captain Thorn — Crossing the Columbia Bar — Selection of site for fort — *Tonquin* leaves Astoria — The loss of the *Tonquin* — Criticism of Captain Thorn.

THE ship selected by Mr. Astor to convey the sea expedition to its destination was called the *Tonquin*—a vessel of 290 tons burden and a good staunch ship. Her commander was Jonathan Thorn, a United States Naval officer on leave, probably for this purpose through the courtesy of the government. He bore an excellent reputation as an officer, was honest and single-minded in his loyalty to his employer, but unfortunately could not distinguish between the rigid requirements of military discipline and the more pliant authority which should be exercised toward those related to him only by the common bond of commercial adventure. The crew of the vessel numbered twenty-one and the passengers thirty-three. The vessel was well laden with merchandise suited to the trade, and carried in addition a full equipment for hunting and trapping parties, materials and tools for the construction of a small schooner on the Columbia,[1] and for the erection of a trading post, and seeds for the cultivation of the soil around the new establishment. The *Tonquin* weighed anchor September 6th, 1810, and cleared the bar at Sandy Hook September 8th. For a distance she was accompanied by an American naval vessel to protect her against search by British cruisers, an event which there was much reason to fear might transpire. The voyage passed off without serious mishap. The Falkland Islands were sighted December 3d, the Pacific ocean was entered December 24th, and the Hawaiian Islands[2] were reached February 11th, 1811. On the 28th of February the *Tonquin* left the Islands, having taken twenty-four natives on board, and on March 22d, sighted land at the mouth of the Columbia.

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[1] For a description of the Columbia river and a consideration of the origin of the name "Oregon," see Part V., Chapter IV.

The principal feature of the voyage was the irrepressible feeling of hostility that prevailed between the Captain and most of the passengers. More incompatible natures it would have been difficult to bring together. The Captain, as a naval officer, had been educated in the iron discipline of a man-of-war and his temperament emphasized its defects and severities. His relentless rigor could not countenance any laxity, either in business matters or in the relations of officers to those below them. The Canadians were bred to a different sort of life. They were freer with each other, cared little for the punctilio of rank or the requirements of discipline so long as the main purpose of their enterprise was prospering. Those who were partners in the association felt that they were sailing in their own vessel, and they naturally considered themselves entitled to privileges which might not be accorded to the common passenger. Captain Thorn was disposed to give them no higher consideration than the ordinary crew, and he at once commenced applying to them the petty regulations of the ship, such as the putting out of lights at a certain hour, and the like. As the partners stood out stoutly for their rights in these matters, bad blood was engendered, and the Captain more than once threatened to put them in irons.

Captain Thorn, moreover, had conceived a very poor opinion of these associates of Mr. Astor. He knew that they themselves had furnished no money, that they had no property at stake, and he could not see them touch a bale of goods or suggest a measure pertaining to the enterprise, without feeling that they were trifling with his employer's interests. He forgot also that most of them had not been to sea before and that everything was new and strange. Had he not done so he might have experienced less contempt for their desire to land here and there, and for their proclivity for taking notes upon the voyage.

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[2] It was in these early days that were laid the foundations of that commercial intercourse which nearly ninety years later was to make the Hawaiian Islands a part of the American Republic.

This bitter feeling led to some perilous situations. At the Falkland Islands the Captain became enraged because some of the party who had gone on shore did not return as he had directed. He weighed anchor, and declared in a letter to Mr. Astor that he would certainly have left them had not the wind changed so as to prevent his sailing. The passengers say that his change of mind was prompted by the bold action of young Robert Stuart, who threatened to shoot him if he did not instantly turn about and wait for the party. At the Sandwich Islands the same imperious temper caused him to abandon Edward Aymes, a sailor, after most unmercifully beating him for not returning, on one occasion, promptly to the ship.

He was himself doubtless conscious of his failing in this regard and felt that he was incurring a great deal of ill will on the part of his fellow passengers. He even at one time imagined that they were plotting a mutiny, but of this there is not the slightest evidence.

It was in every way an unfortunate combination. One can readily understand how, from his point of view, the inflexible Captain was sorely disturbed by everything that did not partake of the clockwork regularity and unbending methods of his own manner of life. In this he was an extreme example of a fault by no means unfamiliar to officers of the Army and Navy at all times. He had not the happy faculty of adapting himself to circumstances, and he could not conceive of such a thing as a business-like proceeding in which stern and rigid discipline were not constantly in evidence. It is a strong point in his favor that his crew were generally loyal, and even those who heartily disliked him were compelled to applaud the constant care which he took of the order and cleanliness of the ship and the health of his passengers and crew. With all his failings he kept constantly in view his employer's interests, and while a man with more tact and knowledge of human nature might have maintained equally good discipline and at the same time a friendly relation with his passengers, none could have shown greater singleness of purpose in carrying out what he understood to be his duty.

At the mouth of the Columbia the Captain exhibited what must be pronounced a serious error of judgment, even in his own profession, in his attempts to get over the bar. That wild and tempestuous entrance to the great "River of the West" was well known for its dangers to navigation. At the time of the *Tonquin's* arrival it was in one of its worst moods, when it was almost madness to undertake to sound its channel. Nothing daunted, the Captain at once undertook the task and sent off a boat under charge of the first mate Fox, with a crew of four men. The boat was itself a worthless one, and Fox seems to have felt that he was embarking upon an enterprise from which he should not return. So it proved, for not a word was ever afterward heard from these five men.

On the 23d of March, the Captain continued his efforts, sending out one or two boats which returned without success, but with narrow escapes from disaster. In the afternoon of the next day another crew was sent out, and was soon followed by the *Tonquin* herself. When at the most difficult point of the passage, the strong outward swell (for the Captain had unfortunately selected the period of ebb-tide) swept the small boat out to sea past the *Tonquin*, whose crew were utterly helpless to extend them any assistance owing to the critical situation of the ship. The boat was soon upset and three of the crew were drowned, including one Sandwich Islander. Stephen Weekes, and another islander, succeeded, by dint of the utmost exertion, in making land, where they were found next day by the main party. Thus, at the very threshold of the great enterprise, eight men lost their lives.

It was during the night that the ship finally found herself at a safe anchorage within the mouth of the Columbia.[3] The first care of the crew and passengers of the *Tonquin* was to search for the missing boat crews, and this business occupied most of the 25th of March. They found only Weekes and one Sandwich Islander, and, although some hope of discovering the rest of the party still remained, it was now generally believed that all were lost.

Several days were spent in the search for a suitable site whereon to erect a post. None being found, Captain Thorn became disgusted and proceeded to erect a shed under which to store the material and merchandise for the establishment. He was in haste to get out of the bay and continue the further prosecution of the voyage. The Captain's arbitrary action offended McDougal, the principal partner in the absence of Mr. Hunt, and he, with David Stuart, set out on the 5th of April to explore the south side of the bay. The result of his search was the selection of a site, which, though not entirely satisfactory, was adopted on account of the eagerness of the Captain to discharge his cargo. On the 12th of April sixteen of the party, with the necessary material and equipment, commenced clearing the ground. Soon afterward the *Tonquin* made her appearance and was duly received with a salute of musketry. The new establishment was christened *Astoria.*

The difficulties between Captain Thorn and the partners did not cease with the selection of the site for the post. The Captain could not brook what he considered an unnecessary delay in getting the new buildings ready to receive the ship's cargo. As soon as possible McDougal established his quarters on shore, so as to be freed from the immediate interference of the Captain, and thereafter their rancorous communications were mostly conducted by letter. The delay in building the post was not by any means entirely inexcusable. The site was occupied by immense trees, and the men were not accustomed to the work of clearing ground of such obstructions. Ross gives an amusing picture of the awkward maneuvers of these inexperienced men in felling the huge trees, and his account makes one wonder, not that the site was long in being cleared, but that it was ever cleared at all. At last suitable buildings for the temporary storage of the *Tonquin's* cargo were completed. The ship was unloaded, and on the 1st of June departed from Astoria with Alexander McKay, partner, on board as supercargo, and James Lewis as clerk. We shall follow to her untimely end the good ship that had brought the Astorians to their destination, and shall return to the Columbia at a later opportunity.[4]

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[3] I have assumed March 25th as the date when the *Tonquin* entered the Columbia for it is clear from Irving's detailed description, that the vessel was forced to anchor before she made the entrance, which she finally effected during the night on the flood tide. This must have been between midnight and morning, and the crew were not certain that they were safe over the bar until daylight of the 25th.

The *Tonquin* left Astoria on the 1st of June, 1811, but did not succeed in passing the bar until the 5th. She turned north, and at Gray's Harbor picked up an Indian, who had some skill as an interpreter, to assist in the traffic with the natives. In about a week she arrived at Nootka Sound in Vancouver Island, and anchored opposite a large Indian village located on its shores.[5] The interpreter cautioned Captain Thorn against this tribe, as one noted for treachery toward the whites, but his warnings were unavailing.

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[4] Our data for the loss of the *Tonquin*, one of the most appalling marine disasters in history, are derived from a single original source. This was an Indian of the Chehalis tribe, by the name of Lamazee (Irving), Lamazu (Ross) or Lamanse, according to the recent finding of Mr. Bancroft. He had occasionally been employed by coasting vessels as an interpreter and in that way had picked up enough English to make himself useful. He was taken along on the present occasion and was the sole survivor of the massacre. Some months afterward he was brought into Astoria and there related the circumstances of the disaster. His veracity has been impugned by Ross, with what reason I do not know, but in any case necessity compels us to accept his narrative for there is no other. We have five records of what he said derived directly from those who heard him. The first is by Crooks and Stuart, published in the *Missouri Gazette* of St. Louis, May 15, 1813. The second is contained in *Franchère's Narrative*. The third is by Ross Cox. The fourth is by Irving. The fifth is by Alexander Ross. Irving's is the most minute and elaborate of all, and embodies the most reasonable probabilities from the conflicting reports of those who heard the story.

The danger to trading vessels from the coast Indians was already well known. Many lives had been lost at their hands. Repeated attempts had been made to capture vessels, and in the case of the ship *Boston*, eight years before, the Indians had succeeded in destroying all but two of the crew. Mr. Astor was thoroughly alive to this peril, and his parting counsel to Captain Thorn was to beware of the Indians, and not to permit many on board at a time, for nearly all disasters on the coast had arisen from this cause.

Captain Thorn had evidently too great a contempt for the population that he found at Nootka to cause him to pay any respect to his interpreter's advice or even to that of his employer. McKay and the interpreter went on shore the day after the arrival. They were well received and remained one or two nights. In the meanwhile Clerk Lewis and the Captain opened up a considerable traffic on board. The Captain was not a very politic trader, and soon got into a wrangle with the Indians, which terminated in his striking the principal chief in the face with a bale of furs, and expelling him from the ship. To the chief it was a mortal insult, and he secretly vowed revenge.

As soon as McKay and the interpreter discovered what had happened they hastened back to the ship and remonstrated with the Captain for his rash conduct. The latter treated their fears with contempt, and, as if confirming his views, the Indians, on their next visit, did appear very friendly and pretended to have overlooked the insult to their chief. Thorn, in return, being doubtless somewhat repentant of his act, treated them civilly and welcomed them aboard. Thus matters went on, for how many days we do not know, but until the Indians felt that all apprehension on the part of the whites was allayed. They then fixed upon a day for the execution of their purpose, and early in the morning commenced carrying it into effect.

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[5] It is probable that the date of arrival was not later than June 12, although the estimate of time is based upon confessedly meagre data.

While yet Captain Thorn and Mr. McKay were asleep, a pirogue with some twenty Indians aboard, carrying furs indicative of a purpose to trade, arrived alongside the ship. They were admitted on board without hesitation. Soon after, another boat load arrived, and were likewise admitted, and others were seen approaching from shore. The numbers increasing so rapidly, and the empty canoes being left in charge of the women, together with other suspicious circumstances, alarmed the watch. He sent for the Captain and Mr. McKay, who had not yet come on deck. The interpreter cautioned McKay that there was trouble on foot, and McKay communicated his fears to the Captain. But the latter was still unconvinced and affected to believe any serious danger out of the question. The trading opened up briskly, and the Indians showed none of their usual bickering about prices. As far as possible and not excite suspicion, they demanded knives in exchange. These they concealed about their persons, while the merchandise they threw into the canoes in charge of the women. As they became more completely armed they spread themselves about the deck until there were two or three Indians close by every white man.

Thorn at last began to fear that something was wrong, and ordered preparations for sailing. A part of the crew commenced taking up the anchor, and seven men ascended the rigging to unfurl the sails. When the preparations were nearly complete the Captain told the Indians that he was about to depart, and that they would have to leave the ship. Instantly, by a preconcerted signal, they uttered a terrific yell and commenced the attack. Clerk Lewis was the first man struck, and fell mortally wounded. McKay was the first one killed. He was felled by a war club, flung into the sea and there killed by the women in the canoes. Cox says that he was held for a time in the canoes as a prisoner before he was finally slain. Captain Thorn made a most heroic defense against overwhelming odds, having no weapon but his pocket knife, and was not overpowered until he had slain several of his assailants. It seems that every one on deck was soon killed except Lewis, who had crawled into the cabin.

The men aloft, when they realized the situation, undertook to descend and reach the cabin. Two were killed in the attempt, and Stephen Weekes, who had so miraculously escaped drowning on the Columbia bar, was mortally wounded. He and four uninjured men made their way to the cabin, where, under cover and in possession of fire arms, they soon cleared the ship. The interpreter, during the progress of the fight, had leaped overboard and had taken refuge in the canoes where he was concealed by the women.

The Indians did not return to the boat that day, and at night the survivors of the crew debated what course they should pursue. To try to take the ship away alone was too hazardous, as she would almost certainly be driven ashore where she would fall an easy prey to the natives. It was thought best to abandon her in one of the ship's boats. The wounded man, however, declined to go, urging that he was injured beyond recovery, must soon perish any way, and was determined to sacrifice his life in wreaking vengeance upon the Indians. Who this brave man was is not known. It must, however, have been James Lewis or Stephen Weekes. The narratives of Crooks and Franchère indicate that it was Weekes, while Irving was led to believe that it was Lewis, on account of some expressions which the latter had let fall during the voyage.

Whoever it was, he found a ready instrument for his purposes. In the magazine there were upwards of four and a half tons of powder, enough to blow the ship to pieces.

He resolved to end his own misery by slaying as many as possible of the tribe that had caused it. On the morning following the massacre the Indians cautiously approached the ship. A man appeared on deck and welcomed them on board, but immediately withdrew below. The interpreter, who was with the Indians, thought that it was Mr. Lewis. The Indians soon climbed on board, and meeting no resistance, began to scatter about the vessel, no doubt in high spirits at the rich prospect of plunder before them. Little did they know of the act of stern determination which was then being performed by the intrepid individual who had invited them aboard. He was already at the great magazine prepared to sacrifice his life in revenge upon his savage foes. He ignited the powder, and instantly the vessel was blown to pieces, its wreckage being thrown far and wide with the mutilated bodies of the Indians aboard of and around her. If the massacre had been successful the revenge was doubly so, and for every one of the ship's people who had perished, four or more of the Indians were destroyed. The interpreter himself was on board, but was thrown into the sea unharmed and escaped.

The four men in the ship's boat were now struggling with a contrary wind at the mouth of the bay. They were finally compelled to make for the shore, and having found a sheltered nook, concealed themselves until they could make their escape. It appears that in some way the Indians suspected the escape of some of the crew, doubtless because they had found on board next morning but one of the men who had driven them from the ship the day before. Knowing that they could not survive the sea in its condition that day in an open boat, they rightly concluded that they must be along the shore somewhere within the mouth of the bay. A search was commenced and resulted in the capture of the four men, who were brought to the village and there put to death by torture. Before this took place the interpreter obtained from them a relation of the events which had transpired after the massacre.

For this awful disaster Captain Thorn must alone be held responsible. He violated the instructions of Mr. Astor in admitting the Indians on board, and he displayed a culpable want of tact in dealing with them. His contemptuous treatment of the warnings of Mr. McKay and the interpreter was inexcusable. But he paid for his errors with his life, and while these errors must be charged to his account, they did not involve a suspicion of disloyalty or lack of integrity. Irving, who knew him in childhood, and felt the natural indulgence which such acquaintance inspires, has dealt with his memory with a degree of consideration which does it the most ample justice.

With singular rapidity and accuracy the news of this great catastrophe spread among the Indian tribes, and the overland Astorians were apprised of it while yet far from their destination. The news likewise made its way quickly to New York, for there is a letter by Charles Gratiot dated St. Louis, May 31, 1812, stating that he had received a letter from Astor giving information of the loss of the *Tonquin*. Astor must therefore have heard of his loss not later than the winter of 1811-12.

To the Astorians, among the uncertainties of a new and trying situation, and menaced by an uprising of the surrounding tribes, the loss of the *Tonquin* was a terrible calamity. To Mr. Astor it was an evil augury for the success of the enterprise upon which he had built such far-reaching hopes.

CHAPTER X.

ASTORIA.

THE OVERLAND EXPEDITION — WEST.

Mr. Hunt at Montreal — Arrives in St. Louis — Winter camp at Nadowa — Hunt spends winter in St. Louis — Trouble with Manuel Lisa — Hunt leaves St. Louis — Entire party leaves Nadowa — Lisa attempts to overtake Hunt — Lisa overtakes Hunt — Quarrel between Lisa and Hunt — Arrival at the Aricara villages — Hunt decides to abandon river — Departure from Aricara villages — Expedition stops at the Cheyennes — Edward Rose — Arrival at Green river — Party on Snake river in Jackson Hole — Arrival at Fort Henry — Decision to abandon horses and take to canoes — Departure from Fort Henry — Disaster at Caldron Linn — Departures from Caldron Linn — Hunt and Crooks stopped by the mountains — Hunt leaves Snake river for the Columbia — Arrival at Astoria — McKenzie, McLellan and Reed — Experiences of Crooks and Day — The route of the Astorians.

IN June, 1810, Mr. W. P. Hunt, one of the partners in the newly-formed Pacific Fur Company, went to Montreal, where, in company with another partner, Donald McKenzie, he set about organizing the overland party. The work in Montreal was completed without serious difficulty, and on the 5th day of July, Hunt and McKenzie set out for Mackinaw, where it was proposed to take additional recruits. The route pursued was by the Ottawa river, and the party arrived at Mackinaw on the 22nd of July. At this point Mr. Ramsay Crooks, future president of the American Fur Company, was received into the concern. Mr. Hunt experienced a great deal of opposition at Mackinaw in securing the men he wanted, but by dint of shrewd management he at length succeeded. On the 12th of August the augmented party set out via Lake Michigan, the

Fox and Wisconsin rivers and the Mississippi to St. Louis, where they arrived on the 3d of September.

At St. Louis Mr. Hunt received another partner, Joseph Miller, and made a considerable addition to the party. In order to avoid the expense of wintering in St. Louis, he decided to select a place well up the Missouri beyond the frontier. Accordingly he set out from St. Louis on the 21st of October and stopped November 16th a little above the site of St. Joseph, Missouri, near a small stream called the Nadowa. He stopped none too soon, for the river closed with ice the second day after his arrival.

Three days after Mr. Hunt's departure from St. Louis, letters arrived for him from Mr. Astor, addressed in the care of Mr. Gratiot, who forwarded them by the first opportunity. These letters, it seems, contained important orders from Mr. Astor, giving to Mr. Hunt the chief direction of the overland expedition, which had so far been managed by Hunt and McKenzie on equal footing. This course gave great offense to McKenzie, who considered it a violation of his arrangement with Mr. Astor. It was treasured up as a wrong not to be overlooked, and had a decisive influence on his conduct during the trying period which soon arrived on the Columbia.

At Nadowa Mr. Hunt was joined by Robert McLellan, a partner of Crooks in his recent trading expeditions up the Missouri river. He was given a partnership in the enterprise. John Day, an experienced hunter, also joined the party at this point. In order to attend to personal affairs and to secure more hunters, and also an interpreter for passing the Sioux Indians, Mr. Hunt left Nadowa January 1, 1811, and arrived at St. Louis on the 20th of that month.

In his negotiations at St. Louis during the winter, Hunt was opposed by the Missouri Fur Company and by Manuel Lisa, its principal agent. There seems to have been no adequate reason for this opposition inasmuch as the new expedition was not to operate in the Missouri Fur Company territory, but there may have been a feeling that it was a step on the part of Astor to gain a foothold on the Missouri. Finally, as Mr. Hunt was about to leave St. Louis, this opposition took acute form in the case of Pierre Dorion, who figured for many years as half-breed interpreter among the Indian tribes of the Missouri. Dorion had been in Lisa's service only the year before, and while up the country had contracted a debt for liquor for which Lisa had charged him at the rate of ten dollars a quart. This extortionate charge Dorion refused to pay, and any reference to it by Lisa aroused his passionate indignation. Lisa tried to secure his services again in opposition to Hunt, but the remembrance of the liquor debt defeated his purpose. Dorion took service with Hunt, almost upon his own terms, for besides an extravagant salary he stipulated that his wife and two children should accompany him. Lisa, having failed to detain Dorion, resorted to severer measures, and undertook to have him arrested for debt. In this he was defeated through the timely offices of John Bradbury, the English naturalist, who, with Mr. Nuttall, also an Englishman, were to accompany Mr. Hunt for a considerable distance up the Missouri. Hunt with his party of recruits left St. Louis March 12, 1811. Bradbury and Nuttall remained one day longer to await the arrival of the post, intending to overhaul the boat at St. Charles. Hearing of Lisa's intentions during the day, they set out at 2 A. M. on the 13th, and met the boat the next morning before its arrival at St. Charles, where Lisa was to arrest the interpreter. Dorion at once took to the woods and rejoined the party the following day.

Hunt now proceeded with ordinary progress up the river. On the 17th of March he passed the hamlet of La Charette, a little beyond which, on the following day, Bradbury had a long visit with John Colter. On the 8th of April he arrived at Fort Osage, about forty miles below the present site of Kansas City. Here he was met by Crooks and a few men. The united party proceeded on their way on the 10th, and arrived at the Nadowa wintering ground on the 17th. The winter quarters at Nadowa were abandoned April 21st, and the entire party commenced its long journey to the Pacific.

In the meanwhile Manuel Lisa had set out from St. Louis for the upper Missouri to learn what had become of Andrew Henry, and also to bring down the winter's trade. He was fully aware of the dangers to be encountered in passing the Sioux nations on the Missouri, and was very desirous of overtaking Hunt in order that both expeditions might pass this perilous section together. He had one of the best keelboats that ever ascended the Missouri, and had manned it with twenty picked men. Lisa was a host in himself, being a man of intense energy and never afraid to take hold of any part of the work with his men, leading them in their songs, and otherwise stimulating them to extraordinary exertions. With these advantages he hoped to overtake Hunt, notwithstanding the considerable start of the latter; for on the 2nd of April, when Lisa left St. Charles, Hunt was nineteen days and about two hundred and forty miles ahead.

This remarkable keelboat race, covering a period of just two months and a distance of about eleven hundred miles, is one of the notable events in early Western history. For the greater part of the trip the elements were strong against Lisa. He encountered almost continuous storms and wind, and the difficulties of the trip were considerably above the average. Owing to this fact he did not quite accomplish his purpose of overtaking Hunt before the latter reached the Sioux country.

When Hunt arrived in the neighborhood of the present city of Omaha, where Crooks and McLellan had their principal establishment, Crooks went over to the Platte river to close up his business with the Oto Indians, promising to rejoin the expedition at the Omaha villages. He took his departure May 2nd, accompanied by Bradbury. As Hunt was about to leave the wintering ground of Crooks and McLellan he lost two men, Samuel and William Harrington, by desertion. He reached the Omaha villages on the 10th of May, and was rejoined there by Crooks and

Bradbury on the following day. Lisa was now about one hundred and fifty miles behind Hunt.

On the 19th of May Lisa passed the Omaha villages. and now, despairing of overtaking Hunt before the latter should arrive at the Sioux country, he dispatched a message overland requesting him to wait. This message overtook Hunt near the mouth of the Niobrara river. Hunt sent back an answer that he would wait, but immediately set out with redoubled exertions to get away from Lisa. This unconscionable action was not justified even by the exigencies of fur trade competition. It was caused by the representations of Crooks and McLellan, who believed, rightly or wrongly, that Lisa had been the cause of their detention by the Indians in 1809, and that it was his plan in this instance to get ahead of Hunt and play the same trick on him. Admitting that Lisa was entirely capable of such a proceeding, the circumstances surrounding this case were such that they must have shown Mr. Hunt, had he stopped to reflect, that it could not have been the present motive. Lisa had but a small force, twenty men, wholly insufficient to pass the Sioux country with safety; he knew that Hunt was not planning to enter the trade of the Missouri, but was going to the Columbia, and thus there was an absence of motive for such a proceeding as Hunt suspected. The subsequent course of events showed this to be the case, and it is only simple justice to Lisa to exculpate him from any insincerity in this affair. But McLellan was so imbued with the idea that Lisa could mean nothing but treachery, that he not only threatened to shoot him as soon as he should meet him in the Indian country, but prevailed upon Hunt to take the underhand course which he did. In this way the chances of disaster to both parties were greatly increased, and no good end was served.

On May 22nd Hunt picked up Alexander Carson and Ben Jones, and on the 26th John Hoback, Edward Robinson, and Jacob Rezner, all of whom had gone up the river with the Missouri Fur Company. The latter three were returning from Henry's abandoned post on the north fork of Snake river. It is probable that these five men belonged to the forty "Americans and expert riflemen" who escorted the Mandan chief to his nation. These acquisitions to Hunt's force were partly neutralized by the desertion of two men on the 25th of May.

Late in the month of May the wind and weather which had hitherto been against Lisa turned more in his favor. When he reached the Niobrara he was but sixty miles behind Hunt. Finding that Hunt had not waited for him, and feeling the imminent peril of his situation, he redoubled his exertions, frequently sailing nearly all night, and on one occasion making seventy-five miles in twenty-four hours. Unextinguished fires at Hunt's old camps told him that his efforts were counting, and that he could not be far behind.

On May 30th Hunt was stopped by the Indians, but by a bold and fearless display of force he prevented any hostile action. Lisa met the same Indians June 1st, and also succeeded in getting away from them without serious trouble. On the 1st of June Hunt had another conference with the Indians and again escaped without difficulty. On the morning of the 2nd, while still parleying with the Indians, Lisa's boat hove in sight. Hunt went on for about five miles and then waited for his rival to come up. Lisa had won the race, although not so soon as he had expected. His performance had been a prodigious one when the difficulties of keelboat navigation on the Missouri river and the particularly unfavorable weather of the trip are taken into consideration. He had averaged over eighteen miles per day for sixty days.

The united parties now proceeded at a leisurely rate and in apparent good humor until the 5th. The weather this day being such that the boats could not proceed, the parties remained in camp a short distance from each other. During the day Lisa and Dorion got into a quarrel over their old difference, and Hunt himself soon became involved on Dorion's side. The matter was rapidly approaching a climax in the form of a duel between Hunt and Lisa, when it was finally settled through the good offices of Bradbury and Brackenridge. McLellan was present, but his threat to shoot Lisa did not materialize. The two parties arrived at the Aricara villages June 12, 1811, thus terminating the first stage of the overland expedition.

Hunt's original plan had been to ascend the Missouri and Yellowstone rivers. But the information derived from the recruits whom he had picked up below, of the great danger of attempting to pass the country of the Blackfeet, decided him to leave the Missouri at the Aricaras, and to make the rest of the journey to the Columbia by land. It was therefore necessary to secure horses enough to transport his goods, and these he resolved to try to get of the Aricaras. Accordingly a conference was held with these Indians immediately upon the arrival of the party, at which Lisa's extremely pacific and generous conduct largely allayed the suspicions of the other party. Negotiations for horses were at once commenced by Hunt and continued for more than a month. He also entered into an arrangement with Lisa by which he exchanged boats and surplus supplies for horses. To secure these it was necessary to visit Lisa's post among the Mandans, one hundred and fifty miles farther up. Lisa, Brackenridge, and Nuttall set out by boat June 19th, and Crooks and Bradbury by land the same day. The latter party reached the fort late at night on the 22nd, and the boat party arrived on the 26th. Crooks started on his return with the horses next day and arrived safely at Hunt's encampment. Lisa and the other gentlemen left by river on the 6th of July and reached the Aricaras on the next day.

On the 17th of July Brackenridge and Bradbury left for St. Louis, and without serious incident other than considerable peril from a storm arrived at their destination on the 1st of August. The presence of these two gentlemen on the expeditions of Hunt and Lisa was a most fortunate event, for it is mainly upon their published journals that our knowledge of the expeditions rests.

The next day after the departure of Brackenridge and Bradbury, Hunt with his whole party took up their long and uncertain journey to the westward. It was a serious moment to most of them, for no one knew what lay ahead, and they found but little consolation in the doubtful looks of Lisa's people who had been upon the upper rivers. But the party nevertheless set off, sixty-four in number, including Dorion's squaw and two children, and the interpreter, Edward Rose. There were eighty-two horses, of which each of the partners and the interpreter, Dorion, had one. The rest, seventy-six in number, were laden with the merchandise and other material which it was necessary to take along. From this statement some idea may be had of the considerable amount of freight which the expedition undertook to carry.

On the 23rd of July Hunt went into camp on the banks of what was then called Big river, near a camp of friendly Cheyennes. Here he remained until the 6th of August, laying in buffalo meat and procuring more horses.[1] An accession of thirty-six horses enabled him to allot one horse to every two of the rest of the party. On this part of the journey Mr. Crooks was for some time seriously indisposed, and had to be carried on a litter.

At about this time Mr. Hunt became thoroughly, and it would seem unnecessarily, alarmed on account of his new interpreter, Edward Rose, whom he had hired to help him while in the country of the Crows. Rose had been among these Indians for two or three years, having probably gone up the river with the Missouri Fur Company in 1809, though possibly with Lisa in 1807. Certain suspicious actions of Rose had induced the belief that he was plotting to betray the party to the Crows. How far these suspicions were well founded can not be said, but the probabilities are all against them. At any rate, Hunt was badly worked up over the matter and resorted to precautions which seem almost ridiculous, considering the strength of his party.[2]

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[1] The Aricaras and Cheyennes were horse-dealing tribes.—See Part VI, Chapter IX.

Setting out anew on the 6th of August, the party made their way through the maze of hills and streams on the northern border of the Black Hills and across the desolate wastes beyond. On the 17th of August Hunt first saw, from the top of a considerable hill near the route, the distant range of the Bighorn mountains. On the 30th of August the party arrived at the foot of this range and spent two days in the pleasant valleys of the foothills in company with a band of Crow Indians whom they met there. On the 2d of September they left Rose among his old associates and resumed their journey. After considerable difficulty in finding a pass, during which they were obliged to accept the guidance of the Crows for a distance, they made their way through the mountains and met a band of Shoshones on the western slope. On the 9th of September the party reached Wind river just above the cañon where its lower course takes the name of Bighorn river. They continued up this stream for eighty miles and left it at 3 P. M. September 15th, to cross the Wind River mountains into the valley of Green river. The whole of the next day was spent in making the passage, which seems to have been in the neighborhood of Union Pass, and it was not until the evening of the 16th that they reached Green river well towards its source. While on the summit of the pass they caught a glimpse of the Teton mountains, already familiar landmarks to Hoback, Robinson, and Rezner.

The party continued in the valley of Green river until the 24th of September and spent the time hunting buffalo, curing meat and recuperating their horses. They resumed their journey on the above date, crossed the divide between Green and Snake rivers, and followed down Hoback river to its junction with the Snake where they arrived on the 26th of September. Here there was a clamor among the members of the party to abandon the horses and take to the river. But information derived from the Indians, and from a reconnaissance along the river, showed that navigation was impracticable. At this point Hunt detached a trapping party of four men to remain in the neighborhood during the winter. They were Alexander Carson, Pierre Delauney, Pierre Detayé, and one St. Michael. He then proceeded on his way October 4th, making for Henry's fort upon the advice of Hoback, Robinson, and Rezner, and after crossing Snake river and Teton pass arrived at the abandoned post *October 8, 1811.*

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[2] For a sketch of this interesting character see Part IV., Chapter VI.

At Fort Henry Hunt committed the great mistake of the expedition. He yielded to the desires of the party, abandoned the horses, and decided to trust to the river the rest of the way. He at once set about manufacturing canoes, and this work was completed and the flotilla loaded within ten days. In the meanwhile, October 10th, a second party of trappers was detached, consisting of Joseph Miller, one of the partners, John Hoback, Edward Robinson, Jacob Rezner, and a man named Cass. Miller joined the party because, apparently, he was disgusted with the enterprise and had decided to throw up his share. The other partners were astonished and mortified at this strange resolution, but could not prevail upon him to alter it.

On the 19th of October the party left their horses in the care of two Snake Indians and embarked in fifteen canoes on the strong, dark, rapid stream. It was a delightful change, and the swift progress of the first day was for the time being a complete confirmation of the wisdom of having adopted it. But the satisfaction was of short duration. The river soon began to show its true character as a treacherous and torrential mountain stream, and gloomy forebodings quickly followed hopeful anticipations. After having passed without serious loss several dangerous places, they at length came, October 28th, to a terrific strait where one of the canoes, containing Mr. Crooks, was wrecked on a rock and one of the men, Antoine Clappine, was drowned. The appearance of this frightful place completely dismayed the party, who gave it the expressive names of "Caldron Linn" and the "Devil's Scuttle Hole."

It was now apparent that further navigation of the river was not to be thought of until it should be explored and its character determined. Parties were at once dispatched down both banks, Mr. Hunt himself going down the right bank some forty miles. He returned with ill report, but the other party thought that boats could be managed after reaching a point six miles below. Four of the canoes were accordingly sent on to make the trial and at the same time John Reed, the clerk, and three men were sent for a more extended exploration of the river. The canoe party returned the day after setting out, having lost their canoes.

The situation that now confronted the party was indeed a grave one, and they fully realized the folly of abandoning their horses and trusting to an unknown stream in the heart of the mountains. The various wreckages and losses had reduced their provisions so that they were face to face with starvation. They had with them a large quantity of goods, and were absolutely without means of transporting them. But something had to be done at once. "After a little anxious but bewildered counsel," as Irving well puts it, three parties set out in addition to that of Mr. Reed which had left two days before. McLellan, with three men, started down stream, McKenzie with four men started north over the desert, and Crooks with five men started back after the horses at Fort Henry. Hunt with the rest of the party began caching their goods so as to be ready for instant departure should necessity demand. Crooks returned after three days, having given up the idea of returning to Fort Henry. Five days later two of Reed's men returned and pronounced the river unnavigable. It was then definitely resolved to abandon any further attempt at navigation and to proceed on foot. Such goods as were not absolutely indispensable were concealed in nine caches, and the party was divided into two detachments, one to descend each bank of the river. Mr. Hunt, with twenty-two persons, including Dorion's family, took the right bank, and Crooks with eighteen men took the left. The divided party set out from Caldron Linn on the 9th of November, still in the mountains with winter at hand.

Hunt's party made their way with much suffering, though with occasional relief at the scattering encampments of Indians, to the neighborhood where the great river, having taken a course almost due north, breaks through the Blue mountain range. A few horses had been secured on the way which relieved the men to some extent of their packs. Dorion's family in particular found this relief a most grateful one. On the 6th of December Hunt was brought practically to a standstill by the mountainous country in front of him, and on the following morning was hailed from the other bank by Crooks' party, whom he had not seen for nearly a month. Crooks had proceeded more rapidly than Hunt and had gone three days' journey farther down stream until his progress had been barred by the mountains. The condition of his party as regards provisions was even more desperate than that of Mr. Hunt, who at once sent across the river an allowance of such as he had.

A retrograde march was now resolved upon for the purpose of securing provisions from the Indians farther up the river. Crooks, who, with one man, had come across the river, was taken sick and was unable to return to his party. Hunt's party proceeded up stream, but Crooks, being sick, fell somewhat behind. He caught up on the 11th of December, when, at his urgent request, more provisions were sent across to his party on the other bank. On one of the return trips, Jean Baptiste Prevost, having become frantic at the sight of some meat, forced himself into the frail craft, upset it before it got across, and was drowned. At this place John Day crossed to the right bank.

Hunt now left Day and Crooks with a few men and hastened on to the stream, Weiser river, which he had passed on the 26th of the previous month. Among the Indians who were encamped some distance up this stream he remained until December 21st, when, having procured a stock of provisions and a guide, he set out on his way to the Columbia. Descending the Weiser to the Snake river he crossed his party with great difficulty. He left behind him Crooks, Day, and four Canadians who resolved to remain among the Snakes rather than undertake the perils of a winter journey across the Blue mountains.

On the 24th of December Hunt left the Snake river under the guidance of the Indian, and six days later, December 30th, arrived at the broad mountain valley later known as the Grande Ronde. The only incidents of importance on this six days' journey were that two of the men, La Bonté and Carrière, gave out and had to be put on horses, and that Dorion's wife gave birth to a child on the morning of the 30th.

Having celebrated New Year's day, 1812, in the Grande Ronde with such cheer as could be obtained from a small band of Indians found there, Hunt and his party set out to cross the Blue mountains, the last barrier that separated them from the Columbia. A week was consumed in crossing the range during which time Dorion's new-born child died and Carrière was lost, never to be heard of after. On the 8th of January Hunt reached the Umatilla river in a warm and pleasant valley and found there some prosperous and well-provided Indians with whom he rested for upwards of two weeks.

On the 20th of January Hunt resumed his journey and moved to the north toward the Columbia where he arrived on the following day. He crossed to the north shore and descended the right bank of the river until he came to the "Long Narrows" (The Dalles) about the end of the month. From the Indians along the river, as well as from those on the Umatilla, Hunt gathered a great deal of information about the establishment at the mouth of the Columbia, the arrival of McLellan, McKenzie, and Reed, and the loss of the *Tonquin*. Finally, having passed the Cascades of the Columbia, Hunt embarked in canoes on the 5th of February and arrived with his party at Astoria, *February 15, 1812*.

McKenzie, McLellan, and Reed, whom we saw depart from the Caldron Linn, luckily united their parties at some distance below that point, near the base of the mountains which later stopped Hunt and Crooks. They were twenty-one days getting through these mountains, when they struck the Clearwater river and thence made their way to the Snake, or as it was there called, the Lewis river. Down this stream and the Columbia they made their way with no more serious accident than the upsetting of McLellan's canoe, January 1, 1812, and the loss of his rifle. The party reached Astoria, *January 18, 1812*, nearly a month in advance of Hunt.

Great was the rejoicing at Astoria upon the arrival of these parties with so few losses; for while the fate of Crooks and his men was still doubtful, there were only three men known to have been lost in the almost insuperable difficulties in which the expedition had become involved. Their safe deliverance was a cause of deep gratitude, and a day was at once given over to a general jubilee.

Returning now to look after Crooks and Day we find that they had not long delayed after the departure of Hunt from the banks of the Snake river. Three of the Canadians abandoned them in February, preferring to remain with the Indians rather than continue the journey. They entirely lost Hunt's trail on his arrival at the Grande Ronde and remained in that vicinity during the rest of the winter, subsisting on beaver and horses. Late in March they resumed their journey, but the Canadian, Dubreuil, who had come with them thus far, gave out, and was left behind with a band of Shoshone Indians. Crooks and Day now went on alone and near the middle of April arrived safely on the banks of the Columbia at about the same point where Hunt had crossed it. Here they found a hospitable tribe of Indians who helped them in their necessities. They soon started down the river, but when near the head of the rapids they were attacked by the native banditti who infested that region, stripped utterly naked and robbed of everything they had with them. They then started back to find the friendly Indians whom they had lately left. On the 1st of May they were picked up by David Stuart's party returning from Okanagan, and with them proceeded to Astoria, which they reached on the *11th of May, 1812*.

There were still absent the four men who had been left by Crooks, and the two detached trapping parties on Snake river — in all thirteen men. Of these, seven reached Astoria nearly a year later, *January 15, 1813*.

Hunt had left St. Louis March 12, 1811, and arrived at Astoria February 15, 1812, a period, including these two dates, of three hundred and forty days. His own estimate of the distance was thirty-five hundred miles. The most direct railroad route at the present time makes the distance from St. Louis to Astoria twenty-three hundred miles. Of the three hundred and forty days consumed at least one hundred and forty were spent in camp at various points or in retrograde marching on Snake river.

Below will be given as close a description of the route followed after leaving the Missouri as it is possible to prepare from the meagre information obtainable. It is believed to be correct within a small error, even in the most doubtful places, while for the greater part of the way it is known to a certainty. The route is laid down on the accompanying map.

The Aricara villages, where Hunt organized for his overland journey, were eight or ten miles above the mouth of Grand river, and thirteen hundred and twenty-five miles above the mouth of the Missouri. From this point the route bore first to the northwest a short distance, then southwest across Grand river and probably one or more branches of the Moreau. Inclining then a little to the north nearer to the valley of Grand river the route followed pretty closely the divide between this stream and the Moreau or possibly went back to the south fork of the Grand. It crossed the state line between South Dakota and Montana near the parallel of 45 degrees 20 minutes, and soon after struck the Little Missouri. It kept up the right bank of this stream some ten miles when it crossed not far from the modern postoffice of Alzada, and bore off to the westward. Coming into a difficult country it bore south for some distance passing near the Missouri Buttes from which vicinity Hunt and McKenzie had their first glimpse of the Bighorn mountains.

From this point the route followed the general line of the divide between Powder river and the Belle Fourche (North Fork of Cheyenne) inclining toward the former stream, which it reached near the mouth of Pumpkin creek, some twenty miles northeast of Pumpkin Buttes, well-known landmarks of later years.

Crossing the river it reached the base of the mountains along one of the southernmost branches of Crazy Woman's Fork of Powder river. The distance traveled so far is given as four hundred miles by Irving, and four hundred and fifty miles by Crooks, the second estimate being more nearly correct.

In seeking a pass across the mountains during the next few days the party moved southward some thirty miles and entered the range along one of the branches of the middle fork of Powder river, emerging on the other side into the valley of No-Wood creek, near where the little village of Red Bank now stands. The route then took a southwesterly course across a divide into the valley of Bad-Water creek, which it followed to its confluence with Wind river.[3]

No portion of the above route east of the Bighorn chain is now followed as a highway of travel, and its exact location is a matter of uncertainty; but the route given is believed to be correct within an error of five miles on either side. The route across the Bighorn mountains has become a regular highway.

The course of the party after reaching Wind river was up the valley of that stream, sometimes on one side and sometimes on the other, to the near vicinity of where the modern road turns off to Union Pass. There is no doubt that the party followed the regular Indian trail across the Wind river range, and crossed by the pass to which Captain Raynolds, forty-nine years later, gave the name "Union."

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[3] The portion of the route across the Bighorn range has been followed in detail by Ex-Gov. W. A. Richards, of Wyoming, a close student of the history of his state, and the owner of a ranch in that locality. I am indebted to him for valuable suggestions in this and other connections.

From Union Pass the route lay directly across the headwaters of Green river; thence up one of the small unnamed tributaries of that stream and over a divide to Hoback river which it followed to Snake river.

Crossing Snake river the route followed the regular Indian trail across Teton pass into the valley of Pierre's Hole and down that valley to Henry's Fort on the north fork of Snake river.

Of that portion of the route which the party followed after reaching Wind river nearly all has since been used as a public highway. The distance from the Aricara villages to Fort Henry was estimated by Crooks at nine hundred miles and may be considered as the first division of the overland journey. It was all made by packtrain and on horseback, in an entirely successful manner, although with what now seems to have been a good deal of unnecessary delay.

The second division of the journey was from Fort Henry to Caldron Linn[4] where the shipwreck took place. It was made by water all the way and its location is therefore known with precision. The position of the Caldron Linn is not positively known, for the river distances given by the party are absurdly exaggerated. It was probably half way between the American and Shoshone Falls. Irving gives the distance as three hundred and forty miles from Fort Henry; Crooks as four hundred miles. With the utmost allowance for river windings it could not have been more than two hundred miles. This enormous exaggeration arose from an over-estimate of the velocity of flowing water and also from the natural tendency among travelers to overestimate distances when the difficulties are either slight or great.

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[4] This name was probably given by Crooks or McKenzie, the Scotchmen of the party, for Linn is from a Scotch word *Lin* or *Lyn* and means a pool of water in a perturbed state, as at the foot of a waterfall. The caches at Caldron Linn were on the right bank of the Snake river.

The third division of the journey was made on foot from Caldron Linn to Astoria. For a part of the way it was made in five parties, of which three were small detachments under Reed, McLellan, and McKenzie, and two were larger ones under Hunt and Crooks. All followed the general direction of Snake river but the route of Hunt, who had the main party, will alone be considered.

Hunt's route lay along the right bank of the Snake to the neighborhood of the modern Henry's Ferry, and then left the river in a direction slightly west of north until it reached the Boise river near where Boise City now stands. The route then lay down the Boise to the Snake and then down the right bank of the latter stream, to about opposite the mouth of Powder river, Oregon, a tributary of the Snake. Hunt estimated the distance from Caldron Linn at four hundred and seventy-two miles.

Hunt now went back as far as Weiser river where he obtained some supplies and horses from the Indians. He then crossed the Snake near the mouth of the Weiser. The route from here on was practically that of the later Oregon trail. It followed the regular Indian trail through the Grande Ronde, across the Blue mountains and down to the valley of the Umatilla. Thence it descended this valley for some distance and then crossed over to the Columbia near the mouth of the Walla Walla. The remainder of the route was along the Columbia river.

CHAPTER XI.

ASTORIA.

BEGINNINGS ON THE COLUMBIA AND THE OVERLAND EXPEDITION — EAST.

Prosperous beginnings — Rumors of Northwest Company traders — David Thompson arrives at Astoria — Defensive measures against the Indians — The *Dolly* christened — Arrival of the Overland Astorians — Departure of an expedition for the interior — Battle at the Falls of the Columbia — Return of party to Astoria — Arrival of the *Beaver* — War declared by United States against Great Britain — Second expedition leaves Astoria for the interior — Visit of Reed to Caldron Linn — Adventures of Astorian hunters — Stuart and Crooks start for St. Louis — They meet Miller, Hoback, Robinson, and Rezner on Snake river — Arrival at Caldron Linn — On Bear river — Turning north to find Hunt's trail — Robbed by the Crows — On Hunt's trail —McLellan's pilgrimage — Crooks' illness — Arrival in Green river valley — Danger of starvation — Arrival in the Sweetwater valley — The "Fiery Narrows"—Decide to go into winter quarters — Abandonment of first winter quarters — Second winter quarters — Party abandon quarters in spring — Arrival at St. Louis — The route of Stuart and Crooks.

THE *Tonquin* sailed from Astoria on the 1st of June, 1811, and the little band who were left behind to found the first settlement in the valley of the Columbia set diligently about their task. They enjoyed the good fortune of having commenced their work in the spring with an entire summer in which to prepare for their first winter. Good relations had been established with the tribes, and fortune smiled upon the infant colony. In the midst of their activities two Indians, who turned out to be women attired as men, arrived at the post June 15th bringing definite news of a trading establishment on Spokane river, a branch of the Columbia. A similar rumor had arrived as early as the previous April to the effect that there were white men in the neighborhood of the Falls, but this story had been proven untrue. Now, however, there could be no doubt that there were white men higher up, nor any doubt that they belonged to the Northwest Company. There at once loomed up before the eyes of the Astorians the gloomy forecast of the inevitable competition which must ensue between them and this formidable rival.

The strength of the Astorians at this time precluded any extensive operations in planting detached posts, but it was resolved at least to oppose the British post on the Spokane, if such there really were, and Mr. David Stuart prepared to carry a party thither. As he was about to depart there arrived at Astoria, July 15th, a canoe manned by nine white men and bearing the British flag. It proved to be a party under David Thompson, a partner in the Northwest Company, whom that company had dispatched the previous year to anticipate Astor on the Columbia. The desertion of most of his party on the east side of the mountains had defeated his plan, but with a few who remained faithful he had crossed the mountains and descended the Columbia to the sea. He was the first white man to explore that river above the point where it was reached by Lewis and Clark.

The presence of Thompson was regarded with much misgiving by most of the partners except McDougal, who not only treated him with great hospitality, but actually equipped him for the return journey. Mr. David Stuart did not approve of this manner of treating competing traders. On the 23d of July Stuart and his party, consisting of four clerks, two voyageurs, and two Sandwich Islanders, set out for their proposed establishment in the interior, accompanied by Mr. Thompson and party. Stuart at length becoming very distrustful of Thompson's sincerity got rid of him by a ruse and pushed on alone. At the mouth of the Snake river they found a British flag attached to a pole and on it a slip of paper laying claim to the country in the name of Great Britain. It would appear by this that the Northwesters were in that country not for the purpose of trade alone. By the very small margin of three months they missed the opportunity of planting the British flag at the mouth of the Columbia. Stuart continued his journey to the mouth of the Okanagan river, five hundred and forty miles above Astoria, and commenced the erection of a trading house there on the 2d of September.

After the sailing of the *Tonquin* and the departure of Stuart and his party work on the establishment at Astoria was continued with vigor. Presently, however, it was directed to another purpose, that of defense, for substantial rumors had gotten afloat that a general attack by the neighboring tribes was impending. A strong palisade was constructed around the quarters, flanked by bastions upon which were mounted four four-pounders. The men were trained daily in the use of their arms, and all preparations were made for a vigorous defense pending the arrival of the overland Astorians or the return of the *Tonquin*. In this last resource, unfortunately, the Astorians were doomed to disappointment, for rumors soon began to arrive from the neighboring Indians of a terrible disaster to the *Tonquin* — nothing less than her capture and destruction by the Indians, and the massacre of her crew. It was on this occasion that McDougal is said to have practiced a piece of sharp strategy on the Indians. The smallpox had ravaged the coast a few years before, and the Indians remembered it with the utmost terror. McDougal assembled the chiefs whom he believed to be in conspiracy against the Astorians, drew forth a bottle, told them that it contained the smallpox, which he could spread among them by simply uncorking the bottle, and threatened to smite them on the first evidence of hostility. The terrified Indians promised peace and kept their word.

On the 26th of September the large house which was to serve as quarters of the company was finished, and about the same time the small schooner also. This vessel was launched with appropriate ceremonies on the 2d of October, and was christened the *Dolly*, in honor of Mr. Astor's wife. On the 5th of October a party from Stuart's post on the Okanagan arrived, consisting of two clerks and two men. They reported everything satisfactory, and that they had returned only because their services were not needed during the winter, and it was feared that there would not be provisions enough for all. With them came two men, Regis Brugière, a free trapper, with his wife and two children, and an Iroquois hunter, Ignace Shonowane. They had come from the east by the way of the Northwest Company route.

Nothing of especial interest transpired during the remainder of the year. The rainy season set in about the first of October. The Indians withdrew to the interior, and the Astorians were compelled to make considerable use of the *Dolly* in foraging expeditions. A party was dispatched under Robert Stuart to trap on the Willamette, thus opening up that rich and productive region to the white man.

The year thus closed under favorable auspices, and the New Year was welcomed at Astoria with due pomp and ceremony. Eighteen days later Donald McKenzie, Robert McLellan, John Reed, and eight men arrived, and they were followed a little less than a month later by Hunt's party, consisting of thirty-four persons.

On the 22d of March a joint party set out from Astoria for the several purposes of carrying supplies to the post at Okanagan, of visiting Hunt's caches at Snake river, and of carrying dispatches to New York. John Reed was selected to carry the dispatches, and for their better security he sealed them up in a bright tin box, which he strapped upon his person. He was to be accompanied by McLellan, Ben Jones, and two Canadians. Upon arriving at the "Long Narrows" the party suffered a severe attack from the Indians, in which Robert Stuart and McLellan greatly distinguished themselves, and Reed lost his dispatches and almost his life. The bright tin box, by attracting the attention of the Indians, had caused its own loss. One main object of the expedition, viz., the carrying of dispatches to Mr. Astor, being thus frustrated, the visit to the caches was likewise given up, and the whole party went on to David Stuart's post on the Okanagan, where they arrived on the 24th of April. Four days later they set out to return, accompanied by Stuart, who had conducted a successful winter's trade at Okanagan and at a branch post which he had established on Thompson river. About the 1st of May they met Ramsay Crooks and John Day, who were traveling up the river in sorry plight from their recent despoilment by the Indians. The entire party reached Astoria on the 11th of May.

The day before this there had arrived at Astoria the company's ship, *Beaver*, Captain Cornelius Sowles, which had been dispatched from New York by Mr. Astor, October 10, 1811. Besides an abundant cargo she brought John Clarke, a partner, Ross Cox, Alfred Seton, and four other clerks, quite a number of American and Canadian employes, and several Sandwich Islanders. The arrival of this ship was an important event to the new establishment, for it placed everything on a substantial basis, and gave the enterprise every prospect of a successful issue. This bright gleam of sunshine was not yet for a time to be overclouded by the sinister events which were now transpiring in the busy world outside. A little more than a month later, when all was bustle and activity at Astoria, in preparation for the first systematic trading expedition to the interior, there transpired that event which was to prove the downfall of the enterprise. War was declared by the United States against Great Britain on the 19th of June, 1812.

In formulating their plans for the ensuing year the partners determined that Mr. Hunt should carry out the maritime part of Mr. Astor's enterprise, which related to supplying the Russian posts. This assignment of duty was a great mistake, though possibly an innocent one, on the part of all concerned. It deprived the establishment of the one man who, if any one, could have grappled successfully with the approaching crisis.

On the 29th of June there set out for the interior a large party of some sixty individuals, charged with the following purposes: David Stuart, with clerks Matthews and McGillis, was to proceed to Okanagan and conduct the trade in that section; John Clarke, with clerks Pillet, McLennan, Farnham, and Cox, was to establish a central post at Spokane, in opposition to the Northwest Company, and subordinate posts among the surrounding tribes; McKenzie, with clerks Seton and Reed, was to establish a post on the Snake river among the Nez Perces, and to secure the goods left in the caches at the Caldron Linn; Robert Stuart, with a small party, was to carry dispatches to New York.

Everything proceeded prosperously and without notable incident, until the various expeditions reached their posts. The several parties separated about the 31st of July, near the mouth of the Walla Walla. David Stuart arrived at Okanagan on the 12th of August, and on the 25th of that month went among the tribe of Indians on Thompson river, where he remained during the winter, leaving Alexander Ross in charge of the post. Clarke arrived at the site of his proposed establishment on the 21st of August, and immediately commenced the construction of a house. The clerks were later dispatched to trade among the various tribes — Farnham and Cox among the Flatheads, McLennan among the Coeur d'Alênes, and Pillet among the Kootenais. McKenzie proceeded up the Snake river to a point not certainly known, but probably near the mouth of the Clearwater river, and after having commenced the establishment of his post, dispatched Reed to Hunt's caches at the Caldron Linn.

The several detachments in the interior carried out their programs without notable adventure, and it will be of importance to note here only one incident, the visit of Reed to the caches. After assisting McKenzie to establish his post, Reed set out for the caches, probably about September 1st, expecting to reach them in twenty days. The first notable incident of the trip was finding at a camp of Shoshone Indians seven men of Hunt's overland party. They were Carson, Delauney, and St. Michael, of the party who had been detached by Hunt on Snake river October 1, 1811, and Dubreuil, La Chapelle, Turcot, and Landry, who had been left by Crooks in the mountains the preceding winter.

The three men, La Chapelle, Turcot, and Landry, after Crooks had left them, returned to the Snake encampment on the borders of the river. Being destitute of provisions and equipment, they proposed to the Snakes to visit the caches at Caldron Linn. This was done, and six of the nine caches were rifled of their contents. The Indians and the four hunters then went on a grand hunting expedition to the head-waters of the Missouri, where they were set upon by the Blackfeet and robbed of all they possessed. They then returned to the Snake country, where they fell in with Dubreuil, whom Crooks and Day had left in the mountains the preceding March. Soon after this they were joined by Carson, Delauney and St. Michael. These three men, who, with Detayé, had been left by Hunt on Snake river the previous autumn, made a fall and winter hunt in that locality, and went to the Missouri river in the spring of 1812. Here they were attacked by the Crows, who robbed them of everything and killed Detayé. The report of their presence among the Crows found its way to St. Louis that fall through some of Lisa's men, and was forwarded to Mr. Astor in the following January. After this misfortune the survivors went back to the Snake country, where they joined the party of four, as just stated. Delauney had with him an Indian wife, whom he had picked up in his wanderings. Reed, after falling in with these seven men, went on to the caches, where he took what property was left, saw Edward Robinson, received news of Stuart's safe journey thus far, and then returned to McKenzie's post, after an absence of thirty-five days.

It was July 28th that Robert Stuart and his companions arrived at Walla Walla, in company with the large party which left Astoria on the 29th of June for various points in the interior. Stuart at once prepared to set out on his long journey to St. Louis and New York. With him were

Crooks and McLellan, who were tired of the enterprise, and were determined to return home; and also Andri Vallar, Ben Jones, and Francis Leclerc — six in all. John Day, who intended to return, had become violently insane on the way up from Astoria, and it was necessary to send him back. The little party set out from Walla Walla on the 31st of July and, without other incident than that of very hard traveling, arrived, on the 12th of August, on the banks of Snake river, just above the point where it enters the Blue mountains. They followed up the south bank on their way to Caldron Linn. The first incident of importance on this part of the journey was the meeting of a Snake Indian who claimed ownership of Stuart's horse — a fine steed which Stuart desired to take to New York as a present to Mr. Astor. This Indian had been one of Hunt's guides from the mouth of Hoback river to Fort Henry the previous year, and was one of the two men who had been left at the latter place in charge of the horses. From him it was learned that the horses had been stolen, the caches at Caldron Linn robbed, the various hunting parties scattered, and that the survivors were in great distress. The Indian was engaged as a guide, but on the night of August 18th absconded with Stuart's horse.

On the 20th of August the party came upon four of the hunters who had been detached at Fort Henry on the 10th of the preceding October. They were Miller, Hoback, Robinson, and Rezner. They gave to Stuart an account of their wanderings, and a doleful narrative it was. After leaving Fort Henry they went south upwards of two hundred miles and trapped on a river which, they said, discharged itself into the Pacific ocean. It is highly probable that this stream was the present Bear river, Utah, and that these men visited Great Salt Lake. After a successful hunt, they proceeded east for several hundred miles, where they were robbed by a band of Arapahoes. They wintered in this vicinity, and in the following spring were again robbed by the same Indians.

It was about this time that Cass was lost to the party. They told Stuart that he had deserted them in their extremity, taking with him their last remaining horse. It is hardly conceivable that he should thus voluntarily have forfeited the only protection to be found in that remote wilderness, and further doubt is cast upon the story by the fact that Robinson a short time after gave a different version of it to Reed, viz., that Cass had been killed in one of the affairs with the Arapahoes. Uncharitable individuals believed that he had been killed by his companions to allay the cravings of hunger, but of this there is no evidence, and the general good character of the four survivors precludes the possibility of believing it.

The hunters then proceeded westwardly during the spring and summer, becoming reduced to abject want, and when found were on the very brink of starvation and were subsisting upon fish.

Stuart's augmented party now proceeded to the Caldron Linn, where they arrived on the 29th of August. They found six of the nine caches robbed, and after taking from those remaining the things they needed, they closed them up, pending the expected arrival of Reed. Hoback, Robinson, and Rezner concluded to try their luck again, and were accordingly outfitted for another hunt. Miller decided to leave the country.

The party, numbering seven after the accession of Miller, left the Caldron Linn on the 1st of September, and continued up the river. On the 7th they abandoned the river, striking off to the southeast under the guidance of Miller, and on the 9th reached Bear river, to which Stuart gave the name Miller. Continuing up the river until the 12th, they encountered a band of Crows, who stayed with them that night and displayed a decided inclination to give them trouble. The party got away successfully, however, on the 13th, but left the river, which here flows from the south, and turned off due east over the mountains. Coming upon a considerable tributary flowing from the north, they abandoned their eastern course and ascended its valley. It was here that the great mistake of the returning overland expedition was committed. The party had so far followed practically what was afterward the Oregon Trail. They could scarcely have improved upon it, except in the smaller details. But being wholly unacquainted with the country, they fancied that Miller had led them too far south and away off from their proper course. Moreover, that indescribable bewilderment which is expressed by the word "lost," and which only those who have lost their bearings in a wild and unsettled country can appreciate, had come upon the party, and their great desire now was to get back to Hunt's route and follow it to the Missouri. It is difficult to conceive the state of mind which could lead men to such a pass of absurdity as is indicated by their route for the next month. The reader should examine the map and note the camping places of the 13th of September and the 20th of October. They are scarcely six days' journey apart, and the passage would have been made in that time, had not these bewildered overlanders forgotten that the sun rises in the east.

Having decided to regain Hunt's route, they traveled north up the stream they were then on, over a divide to what is now Salt river, and down that stream to the Snake, which they reached nearly where the present boundary line between Wyoming and Utah crosses the river. They arrived here on the 18th of September. The next morning they were robbed of all their horses by the very band of Crows whom they had lately met on Bear river. The party, now without horses, set out *down* Snake river, as if on their way back to Astoria. If they had gone up stream they would have struck Hunt's trail at the mouth of Hoback river, within a distance of twenty-five to thirty miles. On the second day they built a raft and undertook to cross to the north shore. Finding that it floated well they remained in the stream for nearly a week, and made in all, from the mouth of Salt river, about one hundred and ten miles of retrograde course.

Having now passed the main part of the range of mountains along the right bank, and judging the passage to be easy, they concluded to leave the river and cross into the valley of Pierre's Hole, through which Hunt had passed the preceding autumn. They were very apprehensive of danger from the Blackfeet and took extra precautions not to attract the attention of any bands that might be in the vicinity. One of these precautionary measures was to pass over a high hill or mountain that they might more easily have passed around, but would have exposed themselves to parties in the plain below. McLellan, tired out with the hardships of the journey, flatly refused to undergo this extra labor. He struck off alone around the base of the mountain, and was not seen for thirteen days afterward.

The following night, October 1st, Crooks was taken seriously ill, and the party remained in camp in Pierre's Hole for four days. On the 5th the journey was resumed along Hunt's old route, who must have passed this point almost exactly a year before. The party continued their way on the difficult route by which they had come and which was particularly precipitous and dangerous along Hoback river. On the 12th they reached Green river and descended that stream for a distance. The next day they overtook McLellan, whom they found ready to give up in despair. None of the party had had anything to eat for upwards of three days, and so great was their hunger that it led one of them, Leclerc, to propose to Stuart at the evening encampment that lots should be cast to see which should be killed for the salvation of the rest. The fellow was so persistent that Stuart was obliged to threaten his life if he did not desist.

The following day fortune favored the party with an old buffalo bull, which perhaps saved them from starvation. They did not follow Green river far, but bore off in the direction of the Wind River mountains and took a general southeasterly course along the base of this range. In their progress away from the river they crossed a large Indian trail, probably the regular highway down Green river valley. They kept on their way with fair progress, having picked up some game en route, and on the 18th of October luckily came upon a camp of about a hundred Snake Indians, from whom they secured a quantity of provisions and a horse. From these Indians they learned that a large band of Crows were encamped to the east of the mountains in a river valley, probably that of the Sweetwater, in Wyoming.

Setting out next morning they soon came again upon the large Indian trail which they had crossed some days before, and as it led in their direction they followed it the rest of the day and part of the next. But early on the 20th they found that it turned abruptly to the northeast, and as they feared to get any closer to the party that had passed along it, they abandoned it and kept on to the southeast. It is probable that at this point they were again on the line of the Oregon Trail of later years, and had they followed the Indian Trail, they would that day have discovered and crossed the celebrated South Pass, which holds so conspicuous a place in the history of the West.

Turning east on the 21st of October the little party continued for five days over the barren and desolate wastes just south of the Sweetwater mountains, Wyoming, meeting with no incident of special interest. On the 26th they turned to the northeast, and after passing through a gap in the mountains found themselves in a beautiful open valley and on the willowed banks of a strong, clear mountain stream, none other than the Sweetwater river. Here they spent the following day, hunting buffalo. Resuming their course on the 27th, they wound their way slowly down the plentiful valley, passing the sites of what later were known as the Devil's Gate and Independence Rock, and arrived on the 30th at the main stream of the North Platte. During the following day they passed that sublime and august natural formation now known as the Upper Platte cañon, but which, from the red color of the rocks and the turbulent condition of the river below, they named the "Fiery Narrows."

The river in this part of its course bore so strongly to the northeast that the travelers were led quite astray in their conjectures as to its identity. It did not seem possible to them that it could be the Platte, and they concluded that it must be the Cheyenne or Niobrara, or some other stream in that general direction. This erroneous conclusion and the increasing evidences of approaching winter led the explorers into their second serious mistake, that of deciding to go into winter quarters without attempting to reach St. Louis that fall. It was still only the end of October, and in all the section of country which they were to traverse, the months of November and December are, for the most part, months of pleasant weather. They could easily have reached the Missouri by the middle of December and St. Louis by the end of the year, or soon after, thus saving four months' time. They decided, however, to go into winter quarters, and accordingly, having come upon a fine bend of the river with a beautiful wooded bottom, which afforded shelter and protection against storms, with abundant promise of game, they commenced the construction of a cabin on the 2nd of November.[1]

For the next six weeks everything moved off prosperously. The location fully satisfied their expectations, and their new cabin was soon hung full of wholesome buffalo meat, a sure guarantee against the danger of starvation. But alas! in the midst of this apparent security, they were visited one morning by the same band of Arapahoes who had robbed Miller and his party the previous year. The Indians hung around for two days, and although they committed no violence to speak of, they succeeded in getting nearly all the little party's supply of meat. After their departure it was resolved to abandon the place at once, inasmuch as their security there was at an end. They accordingly set out down the river on the 13th of December. They found traveling, after their repose and comfort, very annoying, particularly as the ground was now covered with snow. They continued, nevertheless, for two weeks, having traveled by their estimate three hundred and thirty miles, when they found themselves entirely out of the mountains and upon the prairies below. Rightly judging this time that they were upon the Platte, and that at so late a season of the year it would be extremely perilous to undertake to reach the Missouri, they determined to retrograde until they should find a suitable place to go into winter quarters again. They went back for three days over an estimated distance of seventy-seven miles, and having found a suitable camping ground, went into quarters again on the 30th of December, 1812. Here they remained undisturbed until spring. This situation was about where Wellesville, Nebraska, now stands.

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[1] This was the first building within the limits of the present state of Wyoming. The site was in the beautiful bottom half enclosed by a great bend of the river opposite the mouth of Poison Spider creek.

During the winter they constructed some canoes, and on the 8th of March broke up their encampment and started for the Missouri. They made very little progress for the first twelve days and had to abandon their canoes almost at the outset.

The party were well on their way again by the 20th of March and proceeded without notable incident until the 13th of April, when they arrived at the village of the Oto Indians, already familiar ground to Crooks and McLellan. Here they first learned of the existence of war with Great Britain. They now traded their horse for a canoe, and on the morning of April 16th resumed their journey. On the 18th they entered the Missouri, and having found soon after a deserted canoe, larger and better than their own, they took possession of it. They stopped for a short time at Fort Osage and arrived at St. Louis "in perfect health and fine spirits" on the *30th of April, 1813.*

Their arrival made a great sensation in the little town, for nothing definite had been heard from Mr. Hunt's party for nearly two years. The *Missouri Gazette* chronicled the event with a brief reference to their impressions of the trip and in its issue of May 15th published quite a lengthy account of their journey and of the loss of the *Tonquin*.[2]

This overland journey consumed three hundred and six days, as against three hundred and forty days on Hunt's journey. If we deduct the time uselessly lost in the absurd northern detour from Bear river to Snake river and the time spent in winter quarters, and lost in the attempt to navigate the Platte, that actually consumed on the journey will be found to have been only one hundred and eighty days, and the party should have reached St. Louis by Christmas of 1812.

The route pursued on the return journey was, with three exceptions, that of the Oregon Trail of later years. Stuart's party kept south of Snake river, instead of crossing and following the line of the Boisé. They also missed the line from Bear river to the Devil's Gate, although near it a good deal of the way. From Grand Island to the mouth of the Kansas they followed the rivers, instead of crossing the angle between them, as the Trail did afterward. All of these variations from the true route would have been avoided on another journey. The two Astorian expeditions, therefore, are entitled to the credit of having practically opened up the Oregon Trail from the Missouri river at the mouth of the Kansas to the mouth of the Columbia river.

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[2] These articles were the first public account of the Astorian expedition. That relating to the overland journeys was reprinted in the Appendix of the Journals of Bradbury and Brackenridge. The account of the loss of the *Tonquin* has never been reproduced until in the present work. See Appendix C.

CHAPTER XII.

ASTORIA.

THE COURSE OF EVENTS ON THE COLUMBIA.

News of the outbreak of war — Action of McKenzie and McDougal — Partners return from the interior — Manifesto of the partners — Hunt returns to Astoria and immediately departs again — Arrival of the Northwest brigade — Sea-farings of Mr. Hunt — His delay at the Russian establishments —Sails to the Sandwich Islands — Captain Sowles' conduct at Canton — Hunt sails to Astoria in the *Albatross* — Returns to Sandwich Islands — The *Lark* wrecked — Hunt returns to Astoria in the *Pedler* — Hunt's arrangement with McDougal — Sale of Astoria — Arrival of the *Raccoon* — Astoria rechristened Fort George — Closing scenes at Astoria — Home journey of the Astorians — Departure of the Northwest brigade — Sad fate of John Reed's party.

MR. HUNT, the chief partner, having sailed from the Columbia, and Crooks and McLellan having returned to the United States, the control of affairs at Astoria fell upon Duncan McDougal, and the whole enterprise on the Columbia was practically in the hands of British subjects. They were good, energetic men, however, and in ordinary times would have been as serviceable to the establishment as any one else. The summer and fall of 1812 passed away prosperously both at Astoria and at the detached posts with the exception of McKenzie's. In the midst of this promising outlook, as in an unclouded sky, a menace of impending doom appeared like a black cloud gathering on the horizon. McKenzie, from the time when he was superseded by Hunt, had been out of sympathy with the enterprise. His establishment on Snake river among the Nez Perce Indians did not satisfy him for some reason, and he concluded to remove it to another point. Before doing so he decided to visit Clarke at Spokane and get his advice. While at Clarke's post, some time in December, John George McTavish and Joseph La Roque of the Northwest Company arrived, bringing news of the Declaration of War, and stating that the armed ship *Isaac Todd* was expected at the mouth of the Columbia in the following March. McKenzie did not wait to secure the advice of Clarke, but without consulting him went back to his post, broke up the establishment, cached his goods, and with all his people set out for Astoria, where he arrived January 15, 1813.[1]

McKenzie and McDougal concluded that war had made the situation hopeless, and after a sort of council of war, at which the clerks were silent witnesses, they determined to abandon the enterprise in the following spring and return across the mountains. Some time during the month of March following, McKenzie set out for the interior with Seton and Reed to visit the caches at his late establishment, and to inform Clarke and Stuart of the action taken at Astoria. At a point not far above the Dalles he met a party in two canoes en route for Astoria, under the command of John George McTavish. The two parties passed a jovial and companionable night together, quite unlike the relations of competing traders, and in the morning took their respective ways. When McKenzie arrived at the caches he found them robbed. He at once commenced search for the property and in the meanwhile sent Reed to Spokane and Okanagan with letters from McDougal. McKenzie, after a great deal of trouble, succeeded in recovering most of his stolen property as well as in purchasing a large number of horses. Having accomplished these purposes he repaired to Walla Walla, the agreed rendezvous of the wintering partners before returning to Astoria. Stuart and Clarke joined him there by the 4th of June. The joint party set out for Astoria on the 5th and arrived at that place on the 14th with the returns of the winter's trade. Already those from the Willamette had been received.

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[1] It was at this time that the seven men whom Reed picked up on his way to the caches arrived at Astoria—the last of the overland Astorians to complete the journey.

Upon the arrival of the partners at Astoria the situation of affairs was seriously considered, McKenzie and McDougal being in favor of abandoning the enterprise, and Clarke and Stuart opposing it. The vehement appeals of McKenzie finally carried the day, and Clarke and Stuart reluctantly joined in signing, July 1, 1813, a manifesto which set forth the reasons for abandonment. These were briefly that the non-arrival of the *Beaver* had left them without supplies, while the existence of war rendered their arrival in the future doubtful; that the interior trade had not come up to their expectations; and that they were not able to withstand the competition of the powerful Northwest Company. It was decided to abandon the undertaking the 1st of June, 1814. In the meanwhile Messrs. Clarke and Stuart were to return to their posts for the winter, Reed was to go to the Snake country, and McKenzie to the valley of the Willamette. The post of Spokane was sold to the Northwest Company, and three of the clerks, Ross, Cox, and McLennan, entered the service of that company.

McTavish, who had now been at Astoria for nearly three months, engaged to send dispatches across the country to Astor. McDougal sold him the necessary provisions, and he and Laroque set out with Cox on the 5th of July, accompanied by Clarke, Stuart, and Reed as far as to their respective points of divergence. The parties arrived safely at their destinations. Laroque and Cox, who had been entrusted with the dispatches for the east, had reached the point where they were to leave the Columbia and cross the mountains, when on September 2nd they were met by the Northwest Brigade under John Stuart and Joseph McGillivray, who were on their way to Astoria, armed with full powers to treat for the purchase of the Pacific Fur Company. Cox and Laroque accordingly turned back and the whole party arrived at Astoria October 7th.

In the meanwhile Mr. Hunt had returned to Astoria after a year's absence. Finding that the course of events had already gone so far that he could not change it, he made the necessary arrangements with Mr. McDougal for closing up Mr. Astor's affairs on the Columbia. He remained at Astoria only a week; arriving August 21st, and departing August 26th for the purpose of securing a ship in which to take away Mr. Astor's property and to transport the Sandwich Islanders home.

On the 2nd of October following, McKenzie started for the interior to carry the news of the arrangement with Mr. Hunt and to bring down the Sandwich Islanders. Three days later he met the Northwest Brigade and returned with it to Astoria.

It is now necessary to see what Mr. Hunt was doing all this time, and to follow his ubiquitous wanderings over the Pacific ocean by which he was kept away from Astoria when the fate of the enterprise on the Columbia was being decided. Mr. Hunt sailed in the *Beaver* August 4, 1812, to carry out Mr. Astor's plans of trade with the Russian Fur Company, although it is very evident that Mr. Astor would scarcely have wished to have Mr. Hunt the individual to take charge of it. He understood too well the importance of having that gentleman at Astoria. But it was decided otherwise by the partners, and perhaps none of the others were qualified for that kind of an undertaking. Mr. Hunt sailed to New Archangel, arriving there on the 19th of August, 1812, armed with Mr. Astor's arrangement with the Russian government and company. Although the commandant of the post had no apparent objections to the arrangement and willingly received the goods, he was so intolerably procrastinating in bringing the business to an end that a month and a half elapsed before Hunt could get away. A still further delay was caused by the method of payment, which was made in seal skins, and as there happened to be none at the establishment, the ship was obliged to proceed to the distant island of St. Paul on the confines of Behring sea to get them. Here she was driven off in a storm while Mr. Hunt was on shore, and did not reappear for several days.

It was the middle of November before the *Beaver* was ready to leave the island — two weeks later than the agreed time when Mr. Hunt was to be back at Astoria. Instead of making all haste to return he permitted himself to be dissuaded by the timid counsel of Captain Sowles, whose faults were the exact opposite of those of Captain Thorn of the *Tonquin*. The condition of the ship after the late storm would not in his judgment permit an attempt to enter the Columbia until she was repaired, and he therefore urged, with a great deal of persistency, that she be allowed to proceed to the Sandwich Islands. As that would make it too late to return to Astoria and then reach Canton in time for the markets there, it was thought that Mr. Hunt could wait at the Islands for the next annual ship.

It is not an easy thing to overrule a captain who says that his ship is unseaworthy and must be repaired, and Mr. Hunt was not the man to take that kind of responsibility. So away to the Sandwich Islands went the *Beaver*, where she was put in repair and then sailed for Canton January 1, 1813. Arrived at Canton Captain Sowles exhibited the same timid policy that kept him away from Astoria. He received word from Mr. Astor announcing the existence of war, and directing him to proceed at once to Astoria. He replied that he would await in Canton the arrival of peace and then return home. He failed to dispose of the furs, although offered prices which, if invested in Canton goods, would have netted the company a quarter of a million dollars profit in New York. Compliance with Mr. Astor's orders and the exercise of common business sense might have saved the day at Astoria; for such a brilliant financial beginning to the maritime part of the enterprise would have ensured ample support to the Astorians as soon as the war should cease.

Mr. Hunt found that he might as well be a prisoner in the hands of an enemy as where he now was, so far as any assistance he could render to the company was concerned. Month after month dragged by and still no annual ship. Finally on the 20th of June, 1813, the ship *Albatross* came from China bearing the first news which Hunt had received of the war. He now concluded that this was why the ship had not come, and as he feared that the Astorians might be running short of supplies, he chartered the *Albatross,* loaded her with what he could get in the Islands, and sailed for the Columbia. He arrived at Astoria August 20th, one year and sixteen days after he had left.

Great was his astonishment and chagrin when he learned what had happened, but he found that he was too late to reverse the course of events, particularly as he himself had nothing to show for his own work, and had so completely failed to keep his engagement. He was compelled to acquiesce in the proceedings of the partners and it now became necessary for him to take measures to close up Mr. Astor's affairs. In order to ship the furs collected, and return the Sandwich Islanders to their home, it was necessary to secure another vessel, the *Albatross* not being available. Mr. Hunt accordingly left Astoria a week after his arrival. The *Albatross* was bound first for the Marquesas Islands and then for the Sandwich Islands. At the Marquesas Hunt first learned of the near approach of a British war vessel and gave up all hope of even saving Mr. Astor's property. On his arrival at the Sandwich Islands he found to his astonishment that Mr. Astor had sent out the regular annual ship and that she had come prosperously on her way until near the Sandwich Islands, where she was wrecked in a tempest. The hulk, with the captain and some of the crew, drifted to the Islands, and were there when Mr. Hunt arrived. The latter at once purchased a brig called the *Pedler,* put Captain Northrup of the wrecked ship, *Lark,* in charge, and sailed for Astoria to carry out the orders which Mr. Astor had sent by the ship. These were to remove the company's property as speedily as possible to the Russian settlements to avoid capture, and await the cessation of hostilities. Mr. Hunt reached Astoria February 28th, 1814.

The arrangement between Hunt and McDougal, when Hunt sailed in the *Albatross,* August 26th, was that McDougal should have power to transfer to the Northwest Company, with proper security for arrears of wages, the services of such men as desired to remain. The property belonging to the company was to be protected until Hunt should return for it, and in the meanwhile the Islanders were to be collected and such employes as preferred to leave were to be ready. McDougal was given power to take such measures to carry out these arrangements as might be found necessary.

It was on the 7th of October that the Northwest Brigade arrived at Astoria with full power to negotiate for the purchase of Astoria. Clarke was with them, having sold the post at Spokane. McKenzie, who had set out for the interior five days before, to carry the news of the arrangements between Hunt and McDougal, was also with them. Negotiations for the transfer of Astoria were at once set on foot, and so far as the record goes, were not limited to the post and appurtenances, but embraced the furs and property which Mr. Hunt expected to take away. So briskly did these negotiations move that an agreement was reached on the 16th of October and was signed, according to Franchère, on the 23rd.[a]

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[a] Ross is our authority for the statement that the sale was not actually consummated by transfer of invoices and receipts for some time afterward. The shrewd Northwesters, not satisfied with having driven their rivals out of the country, or with having secured at a fraction of their value the furs and other property of the company, hoped to improve the bargain by getting the property for nothing at all. A British ship of war was momentarily expected and should one arrive before the transfer was actually made, the post and all its property would be captured. It was only on the threat of a resort to extreme measures by McKenzie and McDougal that McTavish consummated the bargain on the 12th of November.

Irving and Franchère make no note of such a proceeding as this and the probabilities are all against it, for in case of capture the property

The whole proceeding was viewed with shame and indignation by the American contingent and by a number of the Canadians as well. They felt that there was no real necessity for the action taken, for, with the transfer of the post, the property which belonged in so large part to British subjects would be respected. But they were in a hopeless minority, with no voice in the councils and no power to stay the course of events.

On the 29th of October a large party set out for the interior to make a transfer of the various posts and of the property at each. Nothing of note transpired at Astoria, except the arrival on November 23rd of Alexander Stuart and Alexander Henry,[3] until the 30th of that month, when the long expected war vessel hove in sight. It was the *Raccoon* of twenty-six guns, commanded by Captain Black. This vessel with the *Isaac Todd*, the frigate *Phoebe*, and sloop of war *Cherub*, had sailed from Rio Janeiro on the 6th of July preceding with John McDonald, a partner of the Northwest Company, on board. The *Isaac Todd* had become separated from her company off Cape Horn, and had not since been seen. The other vessels arrived safely at the agreed rendezvous at the island of Juan Fernandez, and after waiting some time for the *Isaac Todd*, and hearing of the havoc which the American Commodore Porter was making among the British whalers, it was decided that the *Raccoon* should go on alone with McDonald to Astoria, and that the other vessels should cruise after Porter. The *Raccoon* arrived in due time within the mouth of the Columbia.

The officers and crew of the *Raccoon* had been led to suppose that a valuable prize awaited them at the end of

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would have been a prize of war and the Northwesters would not have been entitled to it. It was certainly to their advantage to secure it before any such eventuality. That they made use of the war ship argument to drive a good bargain is very probable.

[3] Henry's Journals, recently made public through the editorial labors of Dr. Elliott Coues, have furnished valuable new light upon the closing scenes at Astoria.

their long cruise. When they found that the post and property had been sold to British subjects they were greatly chagrined and disappointed. Captain Black, it is said, even threatened to bring suit for their recovery, but the threat, if made, was not carried out.

If Captain Black was crestfallen at losing a valuable prize, he was disgusted when he beheld the character of the fort which he had been sent half way around the world to capture. He exclaimed with ill-concealed contempt: "Is this the fort about which I have heard so much talking? D—n me, but I'd batter it down in two hours with a four pounder!"

Captain Black, with a retinue of officers, landed at Astoria late on the night of December 12th, and after dinner on the 13th he took formal possession of the fort in the name of the British king, and rechristened it Fort George. The disappointed captain, could he have foreseen the future, would not have felt ashamed of this day of small things. He had done what no British sailor had ever done before: in taking possession of this fort he had saved an empire to his country.[4]

Thus ended the eventful career of Astoria. It now remains only to see how the various individuals connected with the enterprise made their dispositions for the immediate future. A large number, including McDougal, entered the service of the new company. Others refused offers of service and among them Franchère, who had never ceased to regard the downfall of Astoria as a catastrophe which was wholly unnecessary.[5]

The *Raccoon* left the Columbia on the last day of the year and Mr. Hunt arrived with the brig *Pedler* on the 28th of February, 1814. He was indignant at the conduct of McDougal, but in this case, as before, the march of events during his absence had carried the business beyond his power to remedy it. He now found that he had no property to carry away, and all that he could do was to secure the papers of the late company, and, with such of the Astorians as desired to accompany him, to bid a final adieu to the coast which he did so much to forfeit to his country. He left the Columbia April 3rd, 1814.

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[4] For the significance of this statement see Chapter XIII., this Part.

[5] Franchère did take temporary service while waiting an opportunity to return home.

Messrs. Alfred Seton, J. C. Halsey, Bernard Clapp, and Russell Farnham sailed on the *Pedler,* which was taken first to Sitka and Kamchatka to close up some business there, and thence made her way toward home. She was captured on the coast of California and held for upwards of two months. Nothing further is known of her voyage nor how Mr. Hunt got home. Of the other passengers Halsey was landed at Sitka and drops out of sight. Farnham was landed at Kamchatka and sent overland with dispatches to Mr. Astor. He made the astonishing journey across Asia and Europe and in due time reached New York. He will again appear in our narrative in a more prosperous connection. Clapp left the ship at the Marquesas Islands, " where he entered the service of his country as midshipman under Commodore Porter" (Franchère). Alfred Seton was put off at San Blas on the California coast to make his way home by land. He went to Darien, where he was detained several months by sickness. He finally reached Carthagena, where, in great destitution, he appealed to the commander of a British squadron lying there, and was by him hospitably received. After a time he was landed at Jamaica, whence he made his way to New York. He subsequently achieved great business success and he will again appear in these pages as the capitalist behind Captain Bonneville's enterprise.

On the 4th of April, 1814, the day after the *Pedler* left the Columbia, the Northwest Brigade set out for the east, taking along such of the Astorians as desired to return home by land. Of this number was Gabriel Franchère, who reached home September 2nd.

There is only one other incident connected with the Astorian enterprise which may detain us. When the Northwest Brigade was nearing the Walla Walla on the 17th of April, they were startled by a child's voice crying out in French, "Arrêtez donc! Arrêtez donc!" A canoe party was sent to shore and found that it was the squaw of Pierre Dorion and her two children. From her they received a tale of horror which was a fitting finale to the tragedy of Astoria.

On the 5th of July, 1813, John Reed left Astoria with the large party that set out for the interior that day, his destination being the country of the Snake river, where he was to trap during the winter and collect as many horses as possible for the overland expedition of the following spring. With him were Giles Leclerc, François Landry, Jean Baptiste Turcot, Andre La Chapelle, Pierre Dorion and family, and Pierre Delauny. Late in September he was joined by those hardy hunters, Hoback, Robinson, and Rezner, who here come to sight for the last time.

Reed finally located for the winter on what is now Boise river, Idaho, long known to fur traders as Reed's river. During the autumn three men were lost from one cause or another. Delauny left the party and was never again heard from, and was probably killed by the Indians. Landry fell from his horse and was killed. Turcot died of King's Evil. Late in the year Rezner, Dorion, and Leclerc went about five days' march from Reed's house, where they put up a hut and commenced a prosperous trapping campaign. One evening, about January 10th, Leclerc staggered into the house desperately wounded, and told Dorion's squaw that her husband and Rezner were killed. She at once caught two horses, put Leclerc on one of them, and herself and two children on the other and started for Reed's house. On the third day Leclerc died. When the Indian woman reached Reed's house it was only to find that the rest of the party had likewise been slain. She at once summoned all her energies and started for the Columbia. She forded the

Snake river and got as far as to the Blue mountains, but could not cross at that season. With marvelous resource she maintained herself during the winter, but the imminence of starvation at length compelled her to move. She made her way with great suffering to Walla Walla, and was on her way down the Columbia when she was met by the Northwest Brigade.

CHAPTER XIII.

ASTORIA.

REVIEW OF THE ENTERPRISE.

National significance of the Astorian enterprise — Feasibility of general plan — Lack of overland connection — Astor and the St. Louis traders — Large proportion of British subjects — Unfortunate choice of partners — Criticism of Hunt — Criticism of McKenzie — Criticism of McDougal — No necessity for abandoning Astoria — Responsibility of the United States — Northwest Company exonerated.

THE world never ceases to linger over those decisive events in its history which have deflected the current of human affairs and have influenced for better or worse the welfare of mankind. It matters not that their issues are settled forever; none the less do men love to speculate upon their causes and results and to enquire what would have ensued had their outcome been other than it was. Among these decisive events, though in itself of little moment, and scarcely noticed among the great transactions of that important period, must be placed the enterprise of Mr. Astor upon the Pacific coast. It is no flight of fancy, but rather a sober and legitimate conclusion, to say that if the Astorian enterprise had succeeded the course of empire on the American continent would have been altogether different than it has been. With the valley of the Columbia and the neighboring shores of the Pacific occupied by American citizens instead of British subjects during the period of controversy over the Oregon Question, no part of the Pacific coast line would now belong to Great Britain.

That such has not been the case is less a matter of regret than it would have been had a different civilization found its abode there. It is at least a satisfaction to see in that country a people of our own race and language, no less earnest than we in carrying forward the cause of constitutional government and commercial development into regions of unknown extent and unmeasured possibilities. Nevertheless Americans will never cease to regret the outcome of this affair, nor to feel that it was not what it should have been; and they will always welcome any new light which may exhibit more clearly the causes of its failure, and determine more surely where the responsibility for it ought to rest.

In reviewing the enterprise of the Pacific Fur Company after the lapse of nearly a century, the general plan upon which it was based stands above criticism. It was a project no less feasible than magnificent. Although its course was one of almost uniform disaster, its very failures showed that under normal conditions its success would have excelled the anticipations of its great promoter. He had proposed well, but God and man, with tempest and war, had disposed in a way which he could scarcely have imagined possible.

In the execution of the project Mr. Astor committed certain errors both in the plan of his expeditions and the personnel of his company. It is evident that he should have laid more stress upon his overland connection with St. Louis, particularly in view of the danger of war. It would seem to have been only a measure of common prudence to have established a secure line of operations which the navy of Great Britain could not touch. Had he known as we do that he could easily have gone from St. Louis to the mouth of the Columbia with merchandise in three months, his neglect of this route would indeed have been culpable. To be sure Crooks and Stuart brought back favorable reports of the possibility of this route, but it was evidently not then believed to be as practicable as it really was. Its importance was not, however, entirely overlooked by Mr. Astor, who at one time contemplated sending another expedition overland, but for some reason never did it.

It may be wondered why Mr. Astor did not try to interest St. Louis traders in his schemes, and it is impossible not to feel that he would have been better off with Ashley, Henry, or Manuel Lisa in charge of his affairs than with McDougal, McKenzie, or even Hunt. The truth is that most of the St. Louis traders were afraid of the proposed connection. They wanted a *Missouri* Fur Company, with the trade all to themselves, and, with a narrow provincialism which does them little credit, they refused a share in their trade to Mr. Astor, but kept on for twenty years in a sickly and failing business, only to fall at last into the very hands which might have saved them from their early disasters.[1]

The second point in which it is manifest that Mr. Astor acted contrary to sound judgment, even with only the light that he then had, was in choosing the personnel of his company. It is easy to understand why he turned his eye to the north to find suitable men. At Montreal, or in the service of its great fur company, was to be found the highest experience which the fur trade afforded. If union with that company could not be effected, and it could not, it might at least be possible to secure some of its servants to carry on an independent enterprise. Some of them in fact had not been satisfied with recent treatment by their company, and were ready to join any opposition. Mr. Astor, who had often visited Montreal, had conceived a high opinion of the talent and business methods of the Northwest traders, and even of the rank and file in the company's service. He is said by Ross to have remarked on the occasion of a display of skill in handling a canoe by two Canadian boatmen, that six Americans could not have done so well. Very different was the estimate of relative worth which obtained in the Far West. There one American hunter was rated as equal to three Creole voyageurs. It is apparent that Mr. Astor as yet imperfectly appreciated the worth of the American trader and trapper, and could not bring himself to consider either as an adequate substitute for "*un homme du Nord.*" Therefore he was led to organize his parties largely on the northern frontier instead of at St. Louis, and to compose them mainly of British subjects.

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[1] That such is the true explanation of Mr. Astor's failure to establish himself at St. Louis may readily be seen from the letters of Charles Gratiot, who long tried to get him to establish a house in St. Louis, and tried to persuade the Missouri Fur Company to give him a share in their business.

Had peace continued all would have been well. But it was a decisive error to man his expeditions and compose his company from the subjects of a nation with which the United States was then believed to be on the verge of war. Of the thirty-three company men who sailed on the *Tonquin*, the four partners were all subjects of Great Britain, as were eight of the eleven clerks, and fifteen of the eighteen subordinate employes whose names are given by Franchère. Of those who went with the overland expedition, omitting Crooks, McLellan, and Miller who immediately returned, one partner, Hunt, was an American, and one, McKenzie, a resident of Canada; the clerk, Reed, was an Irishman, although probably an American citizen, while the rank and file who reached Astoria were by a great majority Canadians. The *Beaver* brought one partner, Clarke, an American, although he had long been affiliated with the Northwest Company, and six clerks, of whom only one appears to have been a foreigner, but two of whom must have left Astoria at an early day, as there is not the slightest mention of their presence there. When the fate of Astoria hung in the balance, and was decided by the vote of the four partners present, three of them, McDougal, McKenzie, and Stuart, were British subjects, and McDougal held Mr. Astor's proxy which gave him the determining vote. Of the clerks then on the Columbia, the Canadians outnumbered the Americans by two to one; while of the subordinate employes the disproportion was even greater.

It is obvious enough that in the event of war with Great Britain the same loyal support to an American company as against a British company could not be expected from

British subjects as from American citizens. It is no reflection upon the Canadian Astorians to say this, for simple patriotism could mean no less. War was foreseen at the time that Mr. Astor selected his associates. Two of them, it was afterwards learned, so clearly foresaw its approach that they called upon the British minister at New York to learn what their position would be in case that eventuality should actually ensue. Mr. Astor could not have been blind to the course of events, and common prudence should have led him to trust his enterprise only to the hands of his fellow citizens, or at least to have made it impossible for foreigners to have a majority vote in the councils of his far distant establishment. Fortunate for him would it have been if, in the trying hour of his cherished enterprise, he could have repeated the command which tradition ascribes to Washington — "Put none but Americans on guard to-night." With Americans on guard the pusillanimous action of McDougal and McKenzie in the winter of 1812-13 would not have taken place. With Americans on guard the various parties of Northwesters would not have been received as brothers, but as competing traders, and treated with the scant business indulgence which that shrewd company knew so well how to dispense to its opponents. With Americans on guard the post at Spokane would not have been sold when there was no necessity for it; the manifesto of July 13, 1813, would never have been signed; John George McTavish would not have been permitted to linger with his retainers under the guns of Astoria waiting for a British ship of war; and the shameful bargain of McDougal with McTavish and Stuart of October 16, 1813, would not have been concluded. The fact that Americans were not on guard is the one severe indictment against the management of the Astorian enterprise which will be sustained at the bar of history.

Even leaving out considerations of nationality, Mr. Astor's choice of partners was not a happy one. McDougal, McKenzie, and Hunt did not prove good men in their respective places. Captains Thorn and Sowles were unfortunate selections as ship masters. But such is the experience of every new undertaking. It takes time to learn men and to settle them in their proper places. A few years' service would have corrected these errors and have adjusted each part of the intricate machine to its proper work. Unfortunately this time was not to be had.

Of Mr. Hunt's share in the enterprise not much can be said in commendation except that he was loyal and single-hearted to Mr. Astor throughout. He was not the man for the place. His conduct of the overland expedition was not efficient and he should have been in Astoria in midsummer of 1811 instead of midwinter of 1811-12. Permitting himself to be sent on the maritime expedition was a fatal error, for it took away from the establishment the only partner whose sympathies were unquestionably on the side of the company. He not only allowed himself to be sent away, but he afterward deliberately kept himself away for more than a year, by which time the fate of Astoria was sealed.

McKenzie, Hunt's overland associate, was an able, but unscrupulous man, who could be a powerful enemy or ally, according to his mood. Unluckily he had from the start been soured on the enterprise on account of what he thought an unjust precedence given by Mr. Astor to Hunt. He never had any heart in his work. His establishment was the only one that failed, and he was the first one to lose faith in the undertaking.

Of Duncan McDougal, who held the reins of authority at Astoria during Mr. Hunt's absence, the common verdict is that he was not only unfit for the place but disloyal to his duty. Even his apologist, Ross, admits his unfitness and characterizes him as "a man of but ordinary capacity, with an irritable, peevish temper; the most unfit man in the world to head an expedition or command men." Inasmuch as the suspicion of disloyalty to the company has always attached to his conduct at Astoria, although he strenuously maintained his innocence, it will be worth while to examine the evidence for and against.

From the first McDougal treated the parties of the Northwest Fur Company with a degree of hospitality wholly uncalled for and wholly contrary to the teachings of the school in which he had been brought up. Instead of allowing them only the scant courtesy which common hospitality requires, and giving them plainly to understand that their presence could not be tolerated, he treated them more like associates, distributing favors with a lavish hand, selling them provisions, and permitting them to spy out whatever was going on or in contemplation. This course was noted with disapproval by the other partners and members of the establishment. Ross says of the visit of Thompson, in July, 1811: "McDougal received him like a brother; nothing was too good for Mr. Thompson; he had access everywhere; saw and examined everything, and whatever he asked for he got as if he had been one of ourselves." Small wonder that the people of Astoria regarded Thompson as "little better than a spy in camp." Franchère says that it was the general opinion at the time that he was there solely to anticipate Astor in establishing a trading post at the mouth of the Columbia, but had been prevented by untoward circumstances from doing it.

The action of McDougal and McKenzie in the winter of 1812-13, immediately after McKenzie had returned from the interior with news of the war, was wholly without excuse or justification. The resolution of these two partners to abandon the establishment and quit the country was certainly a most extraordinary proceeding. McDougal, by virtue of Astor's proxy, possibly had the technical right to take such action, but it was never intended by Mr. Astor, and was contrary to the spirit of the Articles of Association. The Association could be dissolved within five years if found *unprofitable;* but there was as yet no evidence that it would be unprofitable, and subsequent events have proved that it would have been quite the reverse. McDougal's action was clearly *ultra vires*, and can only be explained on the ground of cowardice or disloyalty to the enterprise.

When McTavish came down to wait for the *Isaac Todd*, as he said, in the spring of 1813, McDougal permitted him to hang around Astoria for over three months, when it was within his power to have driven him out of the country, even without a resort to force.

Finally at the time of signing the manifesto stating the reason for abandoning the establishment, and during the subsequent period of negotiations for the purchase of Astoria, McDougal's treatment of his competitors was such as to cause general comment and to excite the shame and indignation of the Americans who were present. Add to this that he entered the service of the Northwest Company soon after the transfer, still acting as agent and holding the papers of the Pacific Fur Company, and permitting their contents to be known to the Northwest people, and the burden of proof is very heavy against him that he acted, in the words of Irving, "if not a perfidious, certainly a craven part."

Franchère, who gave the first account of these proceedings to the world, who wrote in Montreal and in French, and therefore not at all to catch the eye of the American public; and, moreover, who bears a reputation untarnished by any suspicions of disloyalty to Mr. Astor, takes positive ground against McDougal. "Those at the head of affairs," he wrote, "had their own fortunes to seek, and thought it more for their interest, doubtless, to act as they did; but that will not clear them in the eyes of the world, and the charge of treason to Mr. Astor's interests will always be attached to their characters." And again, "McDougal, as a reward for betraying the trust reposed in him by Mr. Astor, was made a partner in the Northwest Fur Company."

In all these matters may be seen the fruition of that course which McDougal initiated while still in New York by calling on the British minister there and divulging to him the plans of Mr. Astor. Even while yet in the presence of the patron of the great enterprise he was secretly taking steps, whether intentionally or not, which could but be inimical to his best interest. Information has recently come to light in the journal of Alexander Henry which confirms the *prima facie* evidence of disloyalty to Astor, involved in McDougal's acceptance of a connection with the Northwest Company. McDougal was no favorite with that company, and the relations of the other partners to him, as shown in Alexander Henry's journal, were so strained that they negotiated only by letter. As with all traitors, those whom he had served by his treachery distrusted him. They clearly had no use for him; but nevertheless on the 23rd of December they made formal propositions to him which were accepted on the 25th, giving him a share in the company. It is hardly probable that they would have done this for one whom they so thoroughly disliked except in fulfillment of a promise made upon condition of his facilitating the sale of Astoria.

Of the other partners, and of the clerks, except possibly Ross and Cox, there is no doubt of their loyalty to the undertaking, nor of their readiness to stand by it under all difficulties. McDougal principally, and with him McKenzie, are the men responsible for the downfall of Astoria. Concerning this downfall itself it was as unnecessary as any human proceeding ever was. The facts upon which the necessity of abandonment was alleged in the manifesto of July 13, 1813, stand to this day unproved. In the fruits of the previous winter's trade, the first essay on the Columbia, which had all arrived at Astoria before the middle of June, was a conclusive refutation of the allegation of unprofitableness, and it was only on the ground of unprofitableness that the enterprise could be abandoned. Mr. Hunt had not yet returned as agreed, it is true, and the resident partners knew nothing of the brilliant outlook in that direction; but it was their duty to await.

The only other justification of their action would have been that they could not maintain themselves either from the danger of starvation or of capture by the British. Neither of these dangers was imminent if common sense precautions were taken. The Astorians were never seriously reduced in supplies, and had now learned the country so well that they could easily have made themselves self-supporting. They had, moreover, reason to expect an early addition to their stores from the annual ship or from Mr. Hunt.

As to capture by a British war vessel, it was a matter always within their power to save everything except the buildings, which could be replaced at slight expense. A small establishment could have been built farther back, where a ship's force could not have followed, and here the valuable property could have been stored pending developments. The main house at Astoria could have been kept open in the meanwhile and if a man-of-war had actually come in sight, it could have been hastily abandoned. The war vessel would then have found only the empty buildings and at most could only have destroyed these. The crew would not have dared to undertake an expedition into the interior among natives warmly attached to the Astorians, and would have been compelled to withdraw without having accomplished anything. That this was the opinion of those at the time who remained loyal to the enterprise may be seen from the following remarks of Franchère: "From the account given in this chapter the reader will see with what facility the establishment of the Pacific Fur Company could have escaped capture by a British force. It was only necessary to get rid of the land party of the Northwest Company, who were completely in our power, then remove our effects up the river upon some small stream and await the result. The sloop-of-war arrived, it is true; but, as in the case I have supposed, she would have found nothing, she would have left after setting fire to our deserted houses. None of their boats would have dared follow us, even if the Indians had betrayed to them our lurking place." If there were any doubt on this point it is dispelled by the fact that this very course was in contemplation by the Northwest Company after the transfer, when, on one occasion, it was doubtful whether an approaching sail were friend or foe. It is true that Alexander Henry, in his journal, speaking of his forlorn state after the Northwest Brigade had departed in April, 1814, and had left him in charge at Fort George, says that in the event of the arrival of an American vessel, retreat was impossible to him. But he had no force with him adequate to the task, and the Indians around him were hostile. His remarks refer only to the weakened condition of the fort at that time.

In short, at no time during the career of Astoria was there danger of her capture either by the British war vessels or by the Northwesters. The Astorians were always stronger and better supplied than their rivals. It was in their power to communicate with St. Louis by a route shorter and less dangerous than that of the Northwest Company to Fort William. It was already known to them that Crooks and Robert Stuart had made their way back in perfect safety over all that part of the journey which had given Hunt so much trouble. Henry's journals make known to us now, if it were not patent at the time, how precarious the situation of the Northwest Company really was, and how great was the danger that the course of events, in his own words, "would end in the failure of our business here." All that Astoria ever needed to carry her through the storm was a leader determined not to yield so long as there was a chance to hold out.

Concerning the unfortunate events at sea, such as the loss of the *Tonquin* and the *Lark,* and the conduct of Captain Sowles, bad as they were, they were not by any means irreparable blows to Astoria, for Mr. Astor had covenanted to bear all losses himself for the first five years. The most harmful feature of the maritime business was Mr. Hunt's enforced absence until affairs at the Columbia had gotten beyond recall.

A large share of the responsibility for the loss of Astoria must fall upon the government of the United States. It had warmly approved of Mr. Astor's plans, and although it could grant him no direct assistance in time of peace, it could and ought to have lent him the small aid necessary to protect his establishment from a public enemy. It could not have been insensible to the importance of the infant colony at the mouth of the Columbia. But when the hour of danger came it lent not the slightest aid. To be sure it had its hands full at the time, but the small assistance which was required and which Mr. Astor besought the government to send, would have been a trivial burden. It would at least have been possible to have sent a company of soldiers along the track of Crooks and Stuart, and they would have held the Columbia against any attack to be feared in that quarter.

But alas! there was not a could-have-been in the whole transaction that did not turn out adversely, and wherever the element of chance entered in it ran uniformly one way. The great purpose of the enterprise, the skill with which it was planned, the far-reaching relation which it bore to the future of the United States, and the loss of life and property in the attempt to carry it out, were worthy of a better fate.[2]

In all this affair it is a satisfaction to exonerate the Northwest Company from any dishonorable conduct. They had a purpose to accomplish—that of driving the Americans off the Columbia. They executed this purpose with their characteristic energy and skill. They did not scruple to apply the code of the fur trade in all its severity against their rivals, but they were within their rights. They can not justly be charged with doing any more than they were entitled to do in the circumstances; but that only makes our shame the greater that there was no one on the other side possessed of the same dogged determination to maintain their rights.

[2] The total number of persons lost in the company's service was not less than sixty-five. For a muster of the Astorians, and biographical sketches of the leading characters, see Appendix C.

CHAPTER XIV.

ASTORIA.

ITS AUTHOR AND THE "SOURCES OF HIS INSPIRATION."

Astoria fortunate in her historian — Irving's accuracy impugned — Irving's interest in the fur trade — Alleged subservience to Mr. Astor — Irving charged with plagiarism — Irving's *Captain Bonneville* — Franchère's criticism of *Astoria* — Bancroft's treatment of Irving.

ASTORIA was as happy in finding an historian as she was unfortunate in working out her history. Irving's treatment of this subject has become classic. It has served a two-fold purpose — that of fixing in imperishable characters the history of a great enterprise, and that of preserving to posterity the most real and graphic picture now in existence of a phase of life which has entirely passed away. It is not the purpose here to offer anything in the way of criticism of this great work, but simply to notice one or two popular but erroneous notions concerning it.

The fashion among later writers upon western history has been to rate *Astoria* as a work whose classic standing in literature is due to the brilliancy of its author's style. If not directly, still constantly by innuendo, Mr. Irving's fidelity as an historian is impugned, and he is charged with having embellished his work at the expense of its accuracy. He has been accused by one writer of permitting his friendship for Mr. Astor to bias his judgment of men and events. Finally he has been charged, if not with plagiarism direct, at least with lavish use of the writings of others without due acknowledgment. It is these three matters that will here be given brief consideration.

Great in his calling is the architect or engineer who can design a work like the Brooklyn Bridge, in which every part is so related to every other that there is nothing useless or superfluous in its construction and that the highest result of which the material is capable is realized. But far greater is he who can do not only this, but can add the touches of artistic genius by covering up the cold and severe outlines with the adornments of painting and sculpture, until the result, like St. Peter's of Rome, is a living picture of beauty. The work has lost nothing of its architectural form and proportions, and beneath the superficial beauty are still the same perfect adaptations of the parts to their various uses; but the whole effect is many fold more important, because it appeals to the hearts as well as to the judgments of men. And yet it is a prevalent notion that these two important qualities rarely coexist, and that excellence in either is ordinarily obtained at the expense of the other.

In making a somewhat exhaustive study of the authorities relating to the Astorian enterprise it was expected at the outset to find this popular idea of Irving's *Astoria* the correct one, and that when it came to removing the lustre of art there would be found a rather shaky framework in which would be many a defective member. The result has been exactly the reverse, and it has been a matter of growing astonishment throughout these studies to find with what detail the illustrious author had worked out his theme, and with what judicial fairness he had passed judgment upon actors and events. Not in the allurements of style alone, but in the essential respects of accuracy and comprehensive treatment, Irving's work stands immeasurably above all others upon the subject.

In that always troublesome matter of dates, for example, Irving has fewer errors than any other of the Astorian authors. Most of those in *Astoria* are evidently slips, and are self-corrective from the context.[1]

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[1] To the casual reader Irving may seem to skip over his chronology rather carelessly, by his "next mornings," "following days," etc. But whoever will take pains to fit in the proper dates will find that the

A matter in which we have taken great interest is the recovery of the routes of the overland Astorians. At the time of these journeys there was almost no geographical knowledge of the country traversed between the Missouri and the Columbia — not even names in most instances to describe natural features by. Even when Irving wrote there were only the crudest maps and very little in the way of geographical information yet collected. It would seem, in this situation, that any attempt to work out routes from the meagre data derived from journals of the expedition must be in a large degree a failure, and from no fault of the author. Yet in spite of all these difficulties it is possible to identify most of the localities very closely, and many of them exactly, from Irving's description. Pen pictures which would probably pass for the effusions of a versatile pen are found to be true to the localities even at the present day. There are indeed some gaps and omissions, but these are nothing in comparison with the remarkable feat of preserving so well the line of march in which not a single scientific observation as to course or direction was taken, and in a country of which no map had ever been made.

No mistake could be greater than to suppose that Irving took up this subject simply as one affording him a good theme for his ever-ready pen, or that he neglected in any degree the weighty responsibility of the historian. The fur trade had commanded his attention from early life. He had visited Montreal and the nearer establishments of the Northwest Company, as well as our own prairies. All his life he had been thrown in contact with those who had spent much of their time in the wilderness. The doings of those engaged in the fur trade "have always been themes

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author has not lost his chronology by these omissions, but has carried it along with fidelity. For example take the following from the narrative of the overland journey of the Astorians east: "On the 11th . . . the next day . . . At daybreak . . . Before daylight . . . the next morning . . . the following day . . . the next day, October 17th" etc.

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of charmed interest to me," he once wrote, "and I have felt anxious to get at the details of their adventurous expeditions." And again: "It is one object of our task, however, to present scenes of the rough life of the wilderness, and we are tempted to fix these few memorials of a transient state of things fast passing into oblivion." Such was the purpose — to "fix" the "details" of events — and this motive finds expression in the remarkable accuracy which runs through the entire work.

As to the charge of undue subservience to Mr. Astor's views, it is difficult to see upon what it is based unless it be the fact that these gentlemen were warm friends. No evidence of it can be found in the book itself, which, though full of admiration for Mr. Astor's enterprise, is no more so than the subject deserves. Irving's treatment of the leading members of the company is eminently fair, and errs, if at all, on the side of generous indulgence. How could he treat more considerately than he has the action of Mr. Hunt or the conduct of Captain Thorn? McDougal might indeed wince under the lash of Irving's pen, but he could scarcely complain that the punishment was greater than the crime.

An oft repeated charge against Irving is that he made use of other authorities without due acknowledgment — and of *Franchère's Narrative* in particular. This is always a serious charge, and particularly reprehensible in an eminent author who filches from the works of obscure writers. Let us see what are the facts. At the time of the publication of *Astoria*, there were four published works which treated of portions of the enterprise. These were the works of Brackenridge and Bradbury, which related only the journey from St. Louis to the Aricara villages; and those of Franchère and Cox, which treated of the general history of the enterprise. What reference does Irving make to these works, and what is his own statement concerning the "sources of his inspiration"? He says: "All the papers relative to the enterprise were accordingly submitted to my inspection.

Among them were journals and letters narrating expeditions by land and sea, and journeys to and fro across the Rocky mountains by routes before untraveled, together with documents illustrative of savage and colonial life on the borders of the Pacific. With such materials in hand I undertook the work." Again he refers to the journals as the authorities "on which I chiefly depended." He explicitly states, however, that these were not all; that he derived information from other sources, and he tells us what those sources were. He adds: "I have, therefore, availed myself occasionally of collateral lights supplied by the published journals of other travelers who had visited the scenes described: such as Messrs. Lewis and Clark, Bradbury, Brackenridge, Long, Franchère, and Ross Cox, and make a general acknowledgment of aid received from these quarters." Not only does he thus discharge with the strictest fidelity his obligation to these authorities, but throughout the text, when he makes direct citation, he states the fact in a foot note.

As a matter of fact Irving follows none of his authorities closely, never to the extent of adopting their language. It is indeed difficult to trace his indebtedness, if there was any, and this fact alone negatives any possibility of extensive borrowing. If he did borrow, he so completely worked the matter over in his own incomparable style, that it was to all intents and purposes new matter.

The estimate that we have here given of *Astoria* applies as well to *Captain Bonneville,* a work equally remarkable for its accuracy of detail and its comprehensive treatment of a wide range of subjects. These two works are the classics of the American fur trade, unapproached and unapproachable in their particular field. They are the full fruition of Mr. Irving's desire to "fix these few memorials of a transient state of things fast passing into oblivion."[2]

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[2] Although a few writers have seen fit to refer disparagingly to *Astoria* as an historical authority, there are only two who need

be considered here — Franchère, whose *Narrative* is the earliest history of Astoria, and Bancroft whose treatment is the latest.

Gabriel Franchère, who is the most reliable authority on the history of Astoria except Irving, took occasion in the English edition of his work, to criticise *Astoria* somewhat severely; but nowhere does he complain that Irving borrowed from him without credit. The burden of his complaint is that Irving gave publicity to the choleric opinions of Captain Thorn touching the young Canadians who sailed in the *Tonquin*. It was indeed too rich a feast to be rejected by the genial author, and the world will always thank him for having made the most of it. Franchère, who was one of the "engravers of tombstones" and writers of journals who so moved the contempt of Captain Thorn, seems to have taken Irving seriously as endorsing the Captain's opinions, whereas he only reports them. This sensitiveness at the humorist's treatment of the young clerks is the only thing of consequence that Franchère has to urge against Irving — a complaint with so little foundation that his editor felt called upon to present a note of apology.

Hubert Howe Bancroft has endeavored to appropriate to himself the historical field of the trans-Mississippi country, and his efforts in this direction have borne fruit in thirty-eight massive volumes. He was compelled to rely mainly on co-laborers whose heterogeneous productions have been consolidated under his own direction and all placed in the first person indicative of personal responsibility. The work is unquestionably a great one in the breadth of subject covered and in the extensive list of authorities quoted, and it will always be a valuable reference work to the student. It is not a work of historical accuracy in its details. Such accuracy was not to be expected; for it would have been beyond the compass of human genius to have covered so vast a field in so short a time and have covered it well. It is not to be wondered at that it abounds in errors — wrong dates, confusion of persons, events and places, erroneous reliance upon authorities, and the like — which make it unsafe as a guide for him who would proceed carefully. These defects are inseparable from the immensity of the task and are not to have weight against the great value of the work as a whole.

No such indulgence, however, can be extended to Mr. Bancroft's discussion of certain historic questions, for pressure of work can not explain his implacable prejudices and his itching desire to put forth theories which shall subvert popular ideals or overthrow accepted conclusions. Particularly, whenever it is a question of an American view as against a Spanish, British, or Indian view, Mr. Bancroft, if the circumstances will possibly admit it, ranges himself against his own countrymen.

In no instance is this peculiar trait more flagrantly in evidence than in his treatment of Astoria, its founder and its historian. His persistent bias of judgment and his bitter prejudice, which place him in an attitude of constant hostility toward Astor and Irving, and lead him repeatedly into sheer falsifications and downright slander, are wholly without rational explanation. It will be alike idle and wearisome to examine in detail the several pages of close print in which Mr. Bancroft exploits his hatred of these two historic characters; but a few examples illustrate the tenor of the whole.

Referring to the articles of agreement of the Pacific Fur Company Mr. Bancroft, in his efforts to clear McDougal, says: "In their agreement with Astor they [the partners] reserved the right to close the business should their interests seem so to dictate. Whatever loss might arise from the enterprise fell on each in proportion to their share." This is not so. The association was not to be dissolved until it should prove unprofitable, and the loss for the first five years was not to be borne by the partners in proportion to their share, but by Mr. Astor alone.

"Had this scheme," says Mr. Bancroft, "been based on self-sacrifice, on pecuniary loss for the public good, or the promulgation of some great principle, the current of unqualified sycophancy, sentimentality, and maudlin praise which runs through *Astoria* might be more bearable." Since when has Mr. Bancroft known of a commercial enterprise being organized on the basis of "pecuniary loss for the public good"? Commercial undertakings are not conducted in that way. It is no criticism of Mr. Astor's projects to say that their sole purpose and aim were money-making. All great projects of discovery and colonization have been founded in commerce. It has been the genius of commerce, rather than that of arms, that has carried the flag of England around the world. The first motive in the foreign policy of all governments is the protection and fostering of the commercial enterprises of their subjects wherever they may be. It may, however, be truly said of the Astorian enterprise that it *did* involve the "promulgation of a great principle"—the cause of American empire on the Pacific coast—and it did involve enormous pecuniary loss in an enterprise that was fraught with the highest possibility for the public good. In respect to the vicious attack upon Irving contained in this paragraph, the candid reader will not find in *Astoria* a single sentence that will lend even the color of justification to it.

Mr. Bancroft says of Irving and Franchère: "There are whole pages in *Astoria* abstracted almost literally from Franchère. Pretending to draw all his information from private sources, the author makes no allusion to the source to which he is most indebted, not even mentioning Franchère's name once in his whole work." It is quite evident that Mr. Bancroft had never read carefully either Irving or Franchère or he would have avoided the pitiful blunders contained in this paragraph. The reader is referred to Irving's own statement of his authorities just given, and to his acknowledgment of aid from Franchère, Cox and others.

Again Bancroft says: "In telling this story [of Reed's massacre] Irving takes whole sentences from Ross and Cox without a sign of an acknowledgment; these works, however, were little read in America in Irving's day." The work of Ross was not published until *thirteen years after Astoria!* Irving does not take a sentence verbatim from Cox and moreover acknowledges his debt to that author for such information as was derived from him. His reference to Cox's work was a better introduction to the American reading public than the young author could have secured in any other way, and Mr. Bancroft's slur that Irving attempted to conceal his reliance upon Cox because of that author's obscurity is excusable only on the ground of ignorance.

Finally as a climax to his exhibition of spleen Mr. Bancroft says: "Up to this time the imputation that he [Irving] had received money from Mr. Astor for writing *Astoria* I believed to be utterly false and unworthy of consideration. But . . . I am otherwise unable to account for this unusual warp of judgment." Mr. Bancroft should produce his facts. To Irving living he would hardly make this accusation without proof in hand. It is not the part of courage at this late day, to placard the infamous slander upon the tombstone of one of America's most gifted and beloved authors. It is needless to say that the whole idea is a climax of absurdity. The work itself refutes the charge. Moreover, was Irving so simple as to suppose that he would escape detection at the bar of history if he departed knowingly from the facts? In the fulness of his reputation is it likely that he would tarnish his great name for any "money" that Mr. Astor might give him? Mr. Bancroft in this affair stands in no higher character than that of libeler and slanderer and his performance is a disgrace to American history.

A searching criticism of Mr. Bancroft's treatment of the Astorian enterprise was published in 1885 in the March number of the *Magazine of American History*. It is from the pen of Peter Koch of Bozeman, Montana.

I regret to note in some of the late Doctor Coues' recent works an inclination to sanction these popular errors concerning Irving's works on the fur trade; and I deem it only just to say, as an inference from my correspondence with him, that these impressions were rather the result of reading hostile authors like Bancroft than from mature investigation. As his attention was called through specific examples to the general accuracy and originality of these works, he materially modified his earlier opinion of them.

CHAPTER XV.

THE ROCKY MOUNTAIN FUR COMPANY.

ASHLEY AND HIS MEN.

William H. Ashley — Andrew Henry — Jedediah S. Smith — The Sublettes — James Bridger — Thomas Fitzpatrick — Henry Fraeb — Robert Campbell — David Jackson — Etienne Provost and others.

THE founder of that fur-trading association which at one time in its career bore the name at the head of this chapter, was William H. Ashley, of St. Louis, one of the most noted and successful of the traders. With him was associated Andrew Henry, another distinguished character in the early fur trade; while in his employ was a remarkable group of young men whose names in later years became well known throughout the West. Among them were Jedediah S. Smith, David E. Jackson, William L. Sublette and his brother Milton, Robert Campbell, James Bridger, Thomas Fitzpatrick, Samuel Tulloch, James P. Beckwourth, Etienne Provost, and many others.

ASHLEY.

William Henry Ashley was born in Powhatan county, Virginia, in 1778. He came to St. Louis in 1802, and remained there until his death. There is little known about his early career in St. Louis, and it is necessary to draw inferences from the occasional hints that are found in the newspapers and correspondence of the times. He was engaged at one time in the real estate business, and for some years prior to 1820 was interested in the manufacture of gunpowder at Mine Shibboleth, having doubtless taken up the business as a consequence of the War of 1812. He was also engaged in mining, then one of the most flourishing industries in Missouri, and probably in this way became acquainted with his future able partner in the fur trade, Andrew Henry "of the mines." In 1814 he was one of a committee of gentlemen to solicit subscriptions for a proposed bank in St. Louis. He took an active part in developing the militia of the state, and gradually advanced through the various grades of authority. He is mentioned as Captain in 1813, Colonel in 1819, and General in 1822, being then highest in command of the state troops. In politics, likewise, he began at an early day to take a hand, and in 1820 was elected the first Lieutenant-Governor of the newly admitted state of Missouri.

From these scattering glimpses of Ashley's early life it may be concluded that he was a representative American business man of the frontier type, when fixed callings were the exception and men turned their hands to whatever offered them the best prospect of success. The twenty years' apprenticeship served in the school of frontier enterprise had admirably equipped him to make the most of the opportunity of his life which now opened up before him, absorbing his time for the next six years and leaving him at the end an independently wealthy man.

The rise of the Rocky Mountain fur trade will be sketched in the ensuing chapter. Ashley entered this trade in 1822 in partnership with Andrew Henry. His early essays were not particularly encouraging. In his first expedition he lost a keelboat and cargo worth ten thousand dollars, and in 1823 suffered a terrible defeat at the hands of the Aricaras, and minor outrages to his force under Henry at the mouth of the Yellowstone. In the summer of 1824 he was defeated as candidate for Governor of Missouri. In spite of these reverses, which might well have discouraged him, he set out for the mountains in the fall of 1824 with a new expedition, having sent only a little way ahead of him another under Henry. Luck now turned in his direction. Year after year his parties came down from the mountains with the most astonishing returns, and by 1828 his fortune was assured.

Of Ashley's personal visits to the upper country there were only four. He went as far as to the mouth of the Yellowstone in 1822 and to the Aricara villages in 1823. In 1824 he went to the Green river valley and in the following spring to Great Salt Lake. He made another journey to the mountains in 1826, when he sold out to Smith, Jackson, and Sublette. He started on a fifth trip in 1827 but was prevented by ill health from completing it.

Ashley had at this time formed a comprehensive view of the way in which the fur trade ought to be conducted. He had laid his plans to attempt the Blackfoot country again, in spite of the disastrous failures of the Missouri Fur Company, and he had even fixed upon the mouth of the Marias river as the proper site of his proposed establishment. But his activities were now turned into new fields and he never carried out these extensive designs. His financial fortune being won, the old thirst for political honors returned. It was an opportune moment to present himself to the people as a candidate for their suffrages. He had won a high place in public esteem by his business successes and his public spirit, while his exploits in the mountains had given an air of romance to his career which counts for so much in the quest for popular favor. Keelboats and steamboats were named for him, and "Ashley beaver" came to have a definite place in the trade as the name of an extra fine brand of that fur. His opinions on all matters pertaining to the business of the fur trade were of the highest authority. In short, General Ashley at this time was the most influential man in Missouri, next to Senator Benton.[1]

Ashley was elected to Congress in 1831 to fill the unexpired term of Spencer Pettis, who was killed in a duel with Thomas Biddle on August 27th of that year. He was twice re-elected, and continued in office until March 4, 1837. His services were of great value to the people of his state. His practical knowledge of the western country made his opinions sought on all questions relating to the Indian trade. He supported the bill for the permanent exclusion of liquor from the Indian country, but more because it was an administration measure than from any belief in its practical workings. He was instrumental in securing the first government aid for improving the channel of the Mississippi in the vicinity of St. Louis. He was popular in public life and was greatly assisted by his wife, better known in after years as the wife of John J. Crittenden, and one of the most accomplished women of her time.

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[1] It is possible that there were other and more substantial inducements that led Gen. Ashley to give up his expeditions to the mountains. See foot note to letter of Thomas Forsythe, Appendix E.

Ashley was in poor health when he left Congress and never fully recovered. He returned to his beautiful home in St. Louis where he remained until shortly before his death. Early in 1838, being much broken down, he went with his wife to reside for a time with Dr. James W. Moss, Mrs. Ashley's father, at his home near the confluence of the La Mine and Missouri rivers, hoping that the change would be beneficial. In this they were disappointed; the General's health rapidly failed, and he died March 26, 1838. In accordance with his request, made shortly before his death, he was buried on an Indian mound in a beautiful situation on a bluff overlooking the Missouri a mile above the mouth of the La Mine river.[2] A few years after Ashley's death a wooden fence was built around the grave, but this has now decayed, and as no monument was erected, the grave is in a state of neglect with nothing whatever to mark it — a fate that has befallen many another prominent man.[3]

Ashley's death was a great loss to his state and to the political party to which he belonged. One of the most touching eulogies ever devoted by the press to the memory of a public man was that which appeared in the *Missouri Republican* of April 3, 1838. On the 5th of the same month a meeting was held of the citizens of St. Louis county to take action on his death, while on every hand testimonials of esteem and expressions of sorrow were heard.

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[2] The foregoing facts relating to the sickness and death of General Ashley I have from a biographical sketch by Wm. F. Switzler, published in the *Columbia (Missouri) Herald* Sept. 22, 1899.

[3] "A lind tree to the foot and a cedar to the head" of his grave is the present condition as described by the farmer who now owns the land.

Ashley is said to have been four times married, but of his earlier marriages no record survives. He was married to Miss Elizabeth Christy October 26, 1825, immediately after his return from his first success in the mountains. She lived only five years and in 1833 he married a widow, Mrs. Wilcox, whose rare accomplishments we have elsewhere referred to. Ashley left no children.

HENRY.

Andrew Henry, one of the original incorporators of the Missouri Fur Company, and later the partner of Gen. W. H. Ashley, was born between 1773 and 1778, in Fayette county, Pa. It is not known when he migrated West, but probably before the cession of Louisiana. He joined the Missouri Fur Company in 1809 and bore the brunt of the terrible struggle with the Blackfeet in the following year at the Three Forks of the Missouri. Driven from this position, he crossed the Divide and built a post on that tributary of Snake river, which still bears his name. He was thus the first American trader to carry his business to the Pacific side of the mountains. Unable to maintain himself there he returned to the settlements in the following year. Nothing is known of his doings for the next ten years, but he presumably went into the business of mining, for there is one reference to him about 1815 as "Andrew Henry of the mines."

In 1822 he associated himself with Ashley, and his doings during the next two years will presently be narrated. It is not known when he finally left the Indian country, nor to what business he devoted himself in his later years. He was at one time well off, but lost his money by becoming surety for defaulting debtors. Urged to put his property in his wife's name to avoid its loss, he indignantly repelled the suggestion, preferring to live a poor man rather than a dishonest one.

Henry died at his residence in Harmony township, Washington county, Missouri, January 10, 1832. A St. Louis paper, announcing the event, referred to him as "a man much respected for his honesty, intelligence, and enterprise. . . . One of those enterprising traders who first explored the wild and inhospitable regions of the Rocky mountains."

Henry married, late in life, a beautiful woman of French birth much younger than himself, whom he had once carried as a child in his arms, and then playfully predicted that she would yet be his wife. He left a son, Patrick, who died July 15, 1898, leaving a daughter, Miss Mary Henry, who still resides in the vicinity of her grandfather's home.

Henry is described as tall and slender, yet of commanding presence, with dark hair and light eyes inclined to blue. He was fond of reading and played the violin well. He was not a member of any church, but was a believer in the Christian religion. He was evidently a man of acts rather than words, and no letter or recorded expression of his has come down to us. We know only his signature, which may be seen with that of others at the foot of the articles of incorporation of the Missouri Fur Company.

SMITH.

Jedediah S. Smith was one of the most remarkable men that ever engaged in the American Fur Trade. He was like that distinguished character of later years, Stonewall Jackson, in combining with the most ardent belief in, and practice of, the Christian religion, an undaunted courage, fierce and impetuous nature, and untiring energy. His deeds are unfortunately much veiled in obscurity, but enough has survived to show that he was a true knight errant, a lover of that kind of adventure which the unexplored West afforded in such ample degree.

Smith was born in the state of New York, of respectable parentage, was well educated, and at about eighteen years of age went to St. Louis, where he entered the service of Ashley and Henry in 1823. It is a singular coincidence that

Smith, Jackson, and Sublette were all in this expedition. They greatly distinguished themselves in the battle with the Aricaras, June 2, 1823. After Ashley's retreat, and while he was waiting for the military to come to his relief, it became important to communicate with Henry on the Yellowstone. It was an extremely hazardous errand, and Ashley called for volunteers. To the astonishment of every one, young Smith, a mere youth, stepped forward and offered to go. Ashley was greatly impressed with the young man's intrepidity. He accepted the offer, but prevailed upon an experienced Canadian Frenchman to go with him. The mission was successfully performed, although not without great peril.

The rest of Smith's career in the fur trade will be narrated in another part of this work. It was full of the most perilous adventures, and carried him over all the West, from the British boundary to the Mexican provinces, and from the Mississippi to the Pacific. He was twice in California, and always referred to that country as the most beautiful on the globe. On several occasions his escape from the Indians, from grizzly bears, and from starvation, bordered on the miraculous. In 1826 he became senior member of the firm of Smith, Jackson, and Sublette, which sold out to the Rocky Mountain Fur Company in 1830. The following year the three partners embarked in the Santa Fe trade; but during the first expedition Smith lost his life on the Cimarron.[4]

"Smith was a bold, outspoken, professing, and consistent Christian, the first and only one known among the early Rocky mountain trappers and hunters. No one who knew him well doubted the sincerity of his piety. He had become a communicant of the Methodist church before leaving his home in New York, and . . . in St. Louis he never failed to occupy a place in the church of his choice, while he gave generously to all objects connected with the religion which he professed and loved. . . . Besides being an adventurer and a hero, a trader and a Christian, he was himself inclined to literary pursuits, and had prepared a geography and atlas of the Rocky mountain region, extending perhaps to the Pacific, but his death occurred before its publication."[5]

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[4] See Chapter XXXI., this Part.

SUBLETTE.

This is a name highly distinguished in the fur trade. There were four brothers[6] who engaged in the trade — Andrew, Solomon P., Milton G., and William L.— but only the last two bore a prominent part in it.

Milton G. Sublette was a great deal in the mountains with his elder brother, and was one of the firm of the Rocky Mountain Fur Company, and later of the firm of Fitzpatrick, Sublette and Bridger. He was an able trader, although less distinguished than William L. His death was caused by a disease in his leg, which compelled him to relinquish his expedition of 1834 to the mountains. His leg was twice amputated, but to no purpose, and he died at Fort Laramie December 19, 1836.

William L. Sublette was one of the most distinguished and successful of the fur traders, and renowned as a bold and hardy mountaineer. He was born in 1799, and came to St. Charles in 1818, where he commenced life by putting up the first billiard table in that town. He came from Kentucky stock, and it was claimed by the family that his grandfather was the slayer of Tecumseh, at the battle of the Thames. His ancestors on both sides were celebrated in the frontier history of the West. Sublette was one of the company of "enterprising young men" whom Ashley advertised for and secured for his early mountain expeditions under Henry. With him were Jedediah S. Smith and David E. Jackson, who were long and intimately associated with him in his later business career. He was with Ashley at the Aricara fight, June 2, 1823, and held the rank of Sergeant-

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[5] William Waldo in MS. No. 135, Missouri Historical Society, St. Louis.

[6] A P. W. Sublette was killed by the Blackfeet in 1828 in the Rocky mountains.

Major in the attack upon the villages August 9-11, under Leavenworth.

His name does not occur often in the next three years, but it is certain that he was actively engaged in the mountain trade under Ashley, for in 1826, he, with Smith and Jackson, bought out Ashley and succeeded to his business under the firm name of Smith, Jackson and Sublette.

This partnership being dissolved by the death of Smith in 1831, Sublette remained foot loose in business connections until the fall of 1832. In the summer of that year he went to the Rocky Mountain Fur Company rendezvous in Pierre's Hole, where he participated in the celebrated battle with the Blackfeet July 18th, in which he received a severe wound.

On the 20th of December, 1832, Sublette formed a partnership with his fast friend, Robert Campbell, who had long been a companion on his mountain expeditions. This firm continued for ten years and constituted the only serious opposition which the American Fur Company had to encounter during this time. Their two principal trading posts were on the Platte at the mouth of the Laramie, and on the Missouri, near Fort Union. The firm was dissolved by mutual agreement January 12, 1842, Campbell apparently taking the business, although there is evidence that the firm name was longer continued.

Sublette did not long survive the close of his affairs in the Indian country. While on his way to Washington in 1845 he died at Pittsburg, Pennsylvania, on the 23rd of July.

From a passport now in the possession of Mr. M. L. Gray, of St. Louis, granted by the United States government to Sublette in 1831 to enable him to visit Santa Fe and other points, in New Mexico, we have the following description of his personal appearance: "Height six feet two inches; forehead straight and open; eyes blue, light; nose Roman; mouth and chin common; hair light or sandy; complexion fair; face long and expressive; scar on left side of chin." He was at this time thirty-two years old.

While not a man of conspicuous ability Sublette was admirably adapted to the business of the mountain fur trade; was feared and respected by the Indians; and was a bold and successful leader. His partner, Campbell, and he were fast friends, and in a will of Campbell's dated July 27, 1835, Sublette was included. This recalls an incident in the life of these two men when they went into the battle of Pierre's Hole in 1832. Each made his will orally to the other as they were hastening to the conflict, but fortunately both escaped.

Sublette had some political aspirations, but they were never satisfied. A curious and interesting document in more ways than one, is among the Sublette papers in the possession of Mr. Gray. It is entitled, "Give the *Pioneer à boire! William L. Sublette,*" and is written by one of Sublette's friends who signs himself a "Pioneer of the Far West — one of the hardy race which have been opening the wild country in advance of the thick settlements since the first colonization of our continent." It is a strong plea for the election of Sublette to Congress. After reviewing the situation generally in a strain which today would stamp him as a loyal believer in the Chicago Platform of 1896, the writer presents his candidate "as amongst the fittest of the prominent men of our party to be placed on the general ticket for Congress. His experience, fit age, chivalric character, his intimate acquaintance with the people, and their confidence in him, and above all his undeviating adherence to, and practice of, the pure Democratic-Republican principles through his past life, are the qualifications which endear him to the people." All this, though politics, was true, but it did not avail to send him to Congress.

In 1841 Sublette was appointed aide-de-camp to Governor Thomas Reynolds. In the spring of 1845 he wrote to Senator Benton to see if he could not secure the superintendency of Indian Affairs at St. Louis, and it was probably on this business that he was going to Washington when his last illness overtook him.

Sublette was independently rich when he died. He lived in much comfort, and always maintained a lively interest in his Far West career. At the Sublette and Campbell store there was a wigwam in which an Indian family was maintained. He had several Indians around him, who, when they died, were buried in the private burying ground of the Sublettes. On the Sublette farm were kept specimens of the wild fauna, while in the house were numerous curiosities characteristic of Indian life. He was called Fate by the Indians.

Sublette was buried in the private burying ground on the farm in the outskirts of St. Louis, and in later years his remains were removed to Bellefontaine cemetery, where they now rest. The place is marked by a granite shaft.

Sublette was married to Miss Frances Hereford, of Tuscumbia, Alabama, March 21, 1844. Gossip surrounds this incident with a little romance worthy of mention. It is said that the lady in question had formed a prior attachment to William's younger brother, Solomon P., but that William's greater fortune turned the scale in his favor. When Sublette died, soon after his marriage, he willed his property to his wife on condition that she should not change her name. Four years after her husband's death she married her first love, Solomon P.

By one of those peculiar fatalities which now and then overtake families, the Sublette family has become almost extinct.

BRIDGER.

James Bridger, who was generally considered the ablest hunter, mountaineer and guide of the West, was born in Richmond, Virginia, March 17, 1804. His father's name was William, and his mother's name was Chloe. They kept a tavern in Richmond. In 1812 they went to St. Louis, but soon moved to Six-Mile Prairie, where they passed the rest of their lives. When Bridger was thirteen years old he was apprenticed to Phil Creamer, of St. Louis, to learn the blacksmith trade. Nothing is known of him for the next five years. In 1822 he went to the Indian country in the party under Andrew Henry, which contained so many names afterward distinguished in Western history. There is some evidence that he was the young man of the party who deserted Hugh Glass in 1823.[7] Bridger was one of the band of explorers among whom were Etienne Provost and Andrew Henry, who discovered South Pass and opened up the trade of the Great Salt Lake and Green river valleys. He is the first white man whom we know to have seen the Great Salt Lake. He visited it in the winter of 1824-5.

It would be an endless task to trace the ubiquitous wanderings of this restless mountaineer during the next forty years of his life. There was scarcely an accessible spot in the mountains that he was not acquainted with. He had become a daring leader before 1830 and in that year was one of the partners of the newly organized firm of the Rocky Mountain Fur Company. He led his expeditions in every direction, saw many a fight with the Indians, and in 1832 was wounded in the back by an arrow, which was extracted in 1835 by the missionary, Dr. Whitman. After the disbanding of the Rocky Mountain Fur Company Bridger entered the service of the American Fur Company, and he seems to have been with the company from that time on, for several years, or at least as late as 1843. There is on record a power of attorney to William L. Sublette executed by Bridger for the collection from Pratte, Chouteau and Company of $3,317.13 for two years' services. It is dated Wind river, July 13, 1838. For several years Bridger was associated with one Vasquez, in hunting enterprises for the American Fur Company. In 1843 he founded Fort Bridger on Black's Fork of Green river, and it became one of the famous posts of the West. After 1843 Bridger led a more regular order of life, giving much of his time to his business at Fort Bridger and gradually drifting into government service. His long schooling of twenty-five years in this wild country had given him qualifications as a guide not surpassed by any other. He was in constant demand on official expeditions, and always commanded a good salary. Almost continuously for upward of twenty years he was engaged in this work, and was as much entitled to be called a veteran as were any of the officers and soldiers of the army.

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[7] See Part IV., Chapter VIII.

But neither the business of his earlier life nor that which followed could long continue. Both related to phases of American history which were essentially evanescent. Bridger lived to see the conditions which made a career like his possible pass entirely away; and in his later years he must have felt like a man without a country, so different was his environment then from that in which he had passed his prime. His keenest enjoyment in his old age was to find some comrade of his early life with whom he might live over again those adventures which now existed only in memory.

Late in life Bridger settled on a farm near Westport, Missouri, now a part of Kansas City. Here he died July 17, 1881.

Bridger gained his chief reputation as a guide, and it would be easy to fill pages with the voluntary testimonials of his contemporaries from published narratives of the times. All references to him are in his praise, and although, like any man of prominence, he had his enemies, these were generally confined to rivals in his particular calling, who were jealous of his superiority.

FITZPATRICK.

Thomas Fitzpatrick was a prominent member of the Rocky Mountain Fur Company, and later was much in the service of the government during the era of exploration. Like many other men of this period his comings and goings are lost behind the scenes, and all that is known of him is from transient glimpses while he is passing across the stage before us. He went to the mountains with Ashley, and was with the Rocky Mountain Fur Company throughout its career. After the downfall of the fur business he continued in the West, and is frequently mentioned in narratives of travel of that period. He was often employed by the government as a guide, and probably knew the Western country as well as any man except Bridger. He was known to the Indians as the Bad Hand.

FRAEB.

Henry Fraeb[8] was a member of the Rocky Mountain Fur Company from 1830 to 1834, and was distinguished among the mountaineers for his skill and courage as a partisan. He must have followed the mountains for as many as fifteen years. He was killed on St. Vrain's fork of the Yampah river in southern Wyoming, in the latter part of August, 1841, in a battle between about sixty whites and a war party of Sioux and Cheyennes. Fraeb and four companions were killed. The battle is supposed to have been near a fort built by Fraeb in this locality, which was then or soon after destroyed.

CAMPBELL.

Robert Campbell was born in 1804 in Aughlane, County Tyrone, Ireland, and came to St. Louis in 1824. A year later he was prostrated with hemorrhage of the lungs, and upon the advice of physicians undertook a trip to the mountains in one of Ashley's parties. The result was a complete restoration of his health. He remained in the mountain trade for the next twenty years or more, but personally withdrew from conduct of operations in the field about 1835. His partnership with Sublette has been noted elsewhere.

Campbell became one of the foremost business men of St. Louis. In the course of his career he was president of the old State Bank and of the Merchants' National Bank, and the owner of the Southern Hotel. In 1851 he was a Commissioner with Father De Smet to treat with the Indians in the great conference near Fort Laramie. He was

[8] Always spelled, and of course pronounced, by his contemporaries *Frapp*, but signed by himself as above.

appointed by President Grant on a similar commission in 1869. He died in St. Louis October 16, 1879.

These are some of the more prominent of the "enterprising young men" whom Ashley took with him to the mountains. One not considered here was David Jackson, of whose biography nothing worthy of mention has come to light except his association with Smith and Sublette. He was fortunate in bequeathing his name to one of the most beautiful situations in nature — the valley and lake at the eastern base of the Teton mountains.

It is a remarkable coincidence that Ashley should have drawn together under his banner so many choice spirits, and in this good fortune may be discerned something of the secret of his success. There were many others of note, besides those whose names are here given. There was Etienne Provost, one of the best and most reliable of the mountain men, believed to have been the discoverer of South Pass, and the same whose name now designates the city of Provo, Utah. There was old Hugh Glass — he of the duel with the grizzly bear — and there were Edward Rose, the Crow man, and James Beckwourth, the inimitable fabricator of frontier yarns. There were also Mike Fink, the famous shot and treacherous friend, and his victim, Carpenter, and Carpenter's avenger, Talbot. How many others there were we do not know, but these are enough to make Ashley's expeditions famous in the annals of the West.

CHAPTER XVI.

THE ROCKY MOUNTAIN FUR COMPANY.

UNDER WILLIAM H. ASHLEY.

Ashley's advertisement — Plan of Gen. Ashley — Henry's expedition of 1822 — Ashley's expedition of 1823 — Treacherous character of the Aricaras — The affair at the Aricara villages — Ashley's retreat — Express sent to Henry and to Fort Atkinson — Henry joins Ashley — Henry returns to the Yellowstone and Ashley to St. Louis — Henry moves up the Yellowstone — South Pass discovered — Jedediah S. Smith visits Hudson Bay Company posts — Henry goes to St. Louis and immediately returns to the mountains — Ashley's doings in 1823-4 — Change in method of business — Ashley goes to Green river valley — Ashley descends Green river and is shipwrecked — Meeting of Ashley and Provost — Provost's party massacred by the Snakes — Ashley south of Salt Lake — Ashley and Ogden — Ashley starts for St. Louis — Meets General Atkinson at mouth of Yellowstone — Arrives in St. Louis — Marries — Returns to the mountains in 1826 — Sells out to Smith, Jackson and Sublette — Etienne Provost's defection — Effect of Ashley's success.

THE beginning of the Rocky Mountain Fur Company may be definitely traced to the following announcement, which appeared in the *Missouri Republican* of St. Louis, March 20, 1822: "To enterprising young men. The subscriber wishes to engage one hundred young men to ascend the Missouri river to its source, there to be employed for one, two, or three years. For particulars enquire of Major Andrew Henry, near the lead mines in the county of Washington, who will ascend with, and command, the party; or of the subscriber near St. Louis." [Signed.] "William H. Ashley." The first recorded license for Ashley to trade on the upper Missouri bears date of April 11, 1822, and "a license of precisely the same tenor and date was granted to Major Andrew Henry."

The response to this advertisement was prompt and satisfactory. The desired number was duly enrolled and was made up almost entirely from young men, "many of whom had relinquished the most respectable employments and circles of society for the arduous" life of the wilderness. The plan was to ascend to the Three Forks of the Missouri, a region which was believed to abound in a "wealth of furs not surpassed by the mines of Peru." The party would be absent three years, trapping on all "the streams on both sides of the mountains in that region, and would very likely penetrate to the mouth of the Columbia."

The expedition was commanded by Andrew Henry,[1] and left St. Louis about April 15, with two keelboats laden with merchandise and trapping equipments. It passed Franklin April 25. About twenty miles below old Fort Osage the party met with a heavy misfortune in the loss of a keelboat from striking a snag. It sank almost instantly, carrying down property valued at ten thousand dollars. It was with difficulty that the crew were saved. In spite of this heavy loss the expedition kept on and met with no incident of serious import until after it had passed the Mandans. On his way from the Mandan villages to the mouth of the Yellowstone in the month of August, Henry met with a serious mishap at the hands of the Assiniboine Indians. He was aboard the boat while a land party with some fifty horses were following the river bank. At a point where the river channel was for a considerable distance near the farther bank, forcing the parties away from each other, a band of Indians met the shore party, and under the guise of friendship got possession of the horses and then rode off. It was the plan of the expedition to push on to the Falls of the Missouri the present season and commence a fort there, but the loss of the horses prevented. A post[2] was accordingly established at the mouth of the Yellowstone, and the winter was spent there. The hunters explored and trapped the streams in that section, and Henry secured a fresh supply of horses.

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[1] Ashley was also with the party and ascended as far as to the mouth of the Yellowstone, returning in the fall.

[2] See list of posts, Appendix F.

Early the next spring Henry set out for the Blackfoot country. The details of his expedition are extremely meager, and all that is known is that he was attacked by the Blackfeet in the neighborhood of Great Falls with the loss of four men killed, and was driven out of the country. He returned to the mouth of the Yellowstone sometime in June, 1823.

In the meantime Ashley had advertised at St. Louis for another one hundred men and had organized his disastrous expedition of 1823. He accompanied it himself, and left St. Louis with two keelboats on the 10th of March. His progress was without notable incident until his arrival before the Aricara villages on the 30th of May.

The fickle and treacherous character of these Indians was well understood.[a] It could never be predicted what their attitude would be. In 1804 and 1806 they were friendly to Lewis and Clark. In 1807 they attacked and defeated Ensign Pryor and his party, who were escorting the Mandan chief home. The Missouri Fur Company and the Astorians had no serious trouble with them in 1811, but in 1816 or 1817 they attacked a party of whites and killed one man. In 1820 they robbed two trading houses of the Missouri Fur Company, located one above and one below the Great Bend of the Missouri. Pilcher, who first visited them in 1822, found them exceedingly friendly, and was quite deceived in regard to their true character. The Indians continued their depradations, however, and even tried to waylay Pilcher himself on his descent of the river. During the month of March, 1823, they went down the river to the Missouri Fur Company establishment among the Sioux, where they robbed a party of whites, and finally, to the number of one hundred and fifteen, attacked the trading house. They were repulsed with the loss of several wounded and two killed, including the son of a principal chief. Such was the record of this tribe down to May, 1823, when General Ashley arrived before their villages.

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[a] See Chapter IX., Part V.

It was Ashley's intention to imitate Hunt's course of twelve years before, and to purchase a number of horses from the Aricaras, so that he could send a portion of his men across the country to the Yellowstone. This was the more important because an express had just arrived from Henry, urging Ashley to bring up all the horses he could secure. It was decided therefore to open up a trade with the Aricaras, who were always well provided with these animals. The conduct of these negotiations, and their lamentable outcome, will be described very nearly in General Ashley's own words.

The General was not wholly unprepared for a hostile demonstration, although these Indians had treated him with great friendship the year before. He knew the character of the tribe and had reason to expect that they would be in a revengeful mood on account of the recent loss of two of their warriors. Upon his arrival, therefore, he anchored his two keelboats well out in the stream and himself with two men went on shore. Here he met some of the principal chiefs, who professed friendship and expressed a desire to trade. Ashley then proposed that the chiefs of the two villages should meet him on the sand beach where all the details of the trade could be arranged. After a long consultation among themselves, the Indians agreed to his proposal, and the council was held at the designated place. Ashley made the chiefs some presents, at which they appeared well pleased. He then said that he had understood that they had had some trouble with a party of the Missouri Fur Company, and feared that they might be disposed to harm him. He explained to them the probable consequences of such an attempt. The Indians replied that the angry feelings which the event had stirred up were now allayed, and that they considered the whites their friends. A price for the horses was agreed upon, the trading commenced, and by the evening of the 1st of June, Ashley had completed his preparations and had arranged to set out the next morning with both the boat and land parties. He was intending to conduct the land party himself.

Late in the afternoon of the 1st the chief of one of the villages sent an invitation to Ashley to visit him at his lodge. Ashley hesitated, but finally decided to go, lest his refusal might lead the Indians to think he distrusted them. Accordingly he went with his interpreter to call on the chief, who received him with every evidence of friendship, as did also several other chiefs who were present. Ashley was quite thrown off his guard by these well-played deceptions, and returned to his quarters on the boat confident that everything was all right.

It should be stated, although Ashley makes no mention of it, that he was warned at this time to be on his guard. His interpreter, the noted Edward Rose, cautioned him that, from signs apparent to those versed in Indian wiles, trouble of some sort was brewing. Ashley seems to have been about as suspicious of Rose as Hunt had been twelve years before, and with just as little reason. He rejected Rose's advice to moor the boats for the night against a bar on the opposite side of the river, and not only remained near the shore next to the villages, but even left his land party encamped on the beach. Among the latter were Smith, Sublette, and Jackson. This party numbered about forty men, and had with them all the horses which had been purchased.

The Aricara Indians at this time resided in two villages, the lower one containing seventy-one dirt lodges, and the upper one seventy. Both towns had been newly picketed with timber, which, according to General Ashley, was from twelve to fifteen feet high, and six inches thick. There was a ditch outside, and part of the way inside also, and the earth was banked up against the inside to a height of eighteen inches. The lower village where Ashley was encamped was on the convex bend of the river with a large sand bar in front, forming nearly two-thirds of a circle. Between the bar and the shore on which the village stood ran the river. At the head of the bar the channel was very narrow and here the Indians had built a timber breastwork which entirely commanded the river. They had shown excellent judgment in their arrangements both for attack and defense.[4] There were even indications that a party of Indians was concealed on the opposite bank at a point where the river channel, after passing the upper village, ran close to the east shore.

At about half past three o'clock on the morning of June 2nd, Ashley was awakened and informed that one of his men had been killed by the Aricaras, and that an immediate attack on his parties was threatened. Instant preparations were made for defense. As soon as daylight came the Indians opened fire from a line along the picketing of the town for some six hundred yards. The ground was broken and there was some timber shelter so that the Indians fought with every advantage of good cover. Their fire was heavy and mainly concentrated on the party on shore, who used their horses as a breastwork. The whites returned the fire with vigor, but the Indians were so well concealed that they suffered but little injury.

As soon as the firing commenced Ashley undertook to have the horses swum across to a submerged sand bar on the other side of the river, but before he could accomplish anything the fire had become so destructive that he abandoned the attempt. He then undertook to move his keelboats in shore, a distance of only about ninety feet, in order to take on the men, but the boatmen were so panic-stricken that they refused to expose themselves in the least degree. Ashley then managed to get two skiffs ashore capable of holding about thirty men, but the land party were determined not to yield, and only seven men, four of whom were wounded, took advantage of the opportunity. The small skiff with two men wounded, one mortally, made for the opposite shore. The large skiff, after transferring its five men to the keelboat, was sent back, but before it reached the shore one of the men who were handling it was shot down and in some way the boat got adrift. By this time nearly all the horses were killed and half the men on shore were either killed or wounded. Ashley made every possible effort to move the keelboats in shore, but to no purpose. The men on the beach, seeing the uselessness of further resistance, retreated into the river and swam to the boats. Several who tried to reach the boats after being wounded were drowned. So fiercely did the conflict rage that it was only fifteen minutes from the time the attack began until the shore party was dispersed and the remnant had reached the boats. The anchor of one of the boats was raised and the cable of the other cut, and they thus drifted down out of the reach of the villages and put ashore at the first timber, apparently on the head of Ashley Island, a short distance below.[5]

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[4] "I think that about three-fourths of them [the Indians] are armed with London fusils that carry a ball with great accuracy and force, and which they use with as much expertness as any men I ever saw handle arms." Ashley.

Ashley's purpose now was, after landing at the timber, to put the party in better shape for defense and then to renew his efforts to pass the village. But to his "surprise and mortification," he was "told by the men (with a few exceptions) that under no circumstances would they make a second attempt to pass without a large reinforcement." The utmost that they would agree to do was, that if Ashley would descend the river some twenty-five miles, fortify his camp, and take other measures for their security, they would wait there until he could receive aid from Henry or elsewhere. Ashley was compelled to accede to this proposition, but when he arrived at the designated point the men determined to go farther. Most of them were resolved to desert. Ashley called for volunteers, and thirty agreed to remain — among them only five boatmen, or voyageurs. He then transferred to one of the keelboats, the *Yellowstone*, as much of the property as he could from the other, and sent the latter down the river with the seriously wounded and such of the men as would not remain, with instructions to store the balance of the property at the first post below. Ashley sent word at once to Major O'Fallon, Indian Agent, and to the commanding officer at Fort Atkinson, notifying them of his disaster, and informing them that if they would send a government force to chastise the Indians he would wait and co-operate. In that event he advised bringing some artillery.

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[5] Two accounts of this battle state that the Indians finally succeeded in getting between the land party and the river, thus cutting off retreat, whereupon the survivors were compelled to cut their way out, leaping into the river and swimming to the boats. But this was not the case.

Of the whites there were killed on the spot twelve, and two of the wounded died soon after, making fourteen. There were also nine wounded, making a total of twenty-three casualties. All the horses and such of the property as was on shore were also lost. Ashley gives the names of the killed and wounded, but none of them are familiar except that of Hugh Glass who was wounded. It was thought that only a few, not more than six or eight, of the Indians were killed or wounded. The shore party fought with the utmost bravery and coolness, but it was impossible to withstand the terrible fire of the Indians, protected as they were by their cover. The voyageurs proved themselves arrant cowards.

Immediately after the battle Ashley sent an express to Henry. It has already been related how young Jedediah S. Smith volunteered on this perilous service. He made his way through successfully, although with some narrow escapes. Fortunately Henry had returned to the mouth of the Yellowstone after his own defeat by the Blackfeet. Smith and Henry, with all but twenty men, who were left in the fort at the mouth of the Yellowstone, descended the river, and joined Ashley near the mouth of the Cheyenne about the 2nd of July. Smith was sent on to St. Louis with the proceeds of Henry's hunt. His boat passed Fort Atkinson near Council Bluffs on the 8th of July and made its way safely to St. Louis, where he saw General Atkinson, who commanded the United States troops west of the Mississippi, and then hastened back to join his employer.

In the meantime Ashley and Henry, hardly believing that the military would undertake the campaign, or arrive before fall if they did, and not wishing to give up their plans entirely, concluded to drop down the river and if possible secure enough horses to equip the party "intended to be sent to the Columbia." They accordingly left their property with a portion of the party and dropped down stream to the mouth of the Teton river, where they stopped for a time to procure horses. They then went on to "Fort Brasseaux,"[6] a fort not elsewhere mentioned, but which seems to have been above, but not far from, Fort Lookout. Here they learned to their great satisfaction of the near approach of the United States troops.

As the campaign which followed is more properly a part of the military history of the period than of the doings of the traders, it will be considered in another place.[7]

Immediately upon the close of the Leavenworth campaign General Ashley dispatched Henry with a party of about eighty men to carry out his plans for the season, which had been so rudely interrupted by the Aricaras. Henry moved across the country in the direction of the Yellowstone river. With him were most of the men whom Ashley had brought up, including Smith, Jackson, Sublette, Rose, Bridger, and old Hugh Glass, whose remarkable adventure with a grizzly bear[8] on this trip was the means of preserving about all the data we now have concerning it.

The evil genius which seemed to dog Henry's footsteps in all his mountain expeditions and constantly harass him with attacks from the Indians, did not yet forsake him. On the 20th of August before he was many days out from the Missouri, he was attacked by a party of Indians, and lost two men killed and two wounded. When he reached the post at the mouth of the Yellowstone he found that twenty-two of the horses he had left there had been stolen by the Blackfeet and Assiniboines. Soon afterward he lost seven more, when he concluded to abandon the post and move up the Yellowstone river.

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[6] See List of Posts, Appendix F.

[7] Part III., Chapter III.

[8] See Part IV., Chapter VIII.

Near the mouth of the Powder river Henry fell in with a party of Crows from whom he purchased forty-seven horses. He then organized a party which he probably placed under the charge of Etienne Provost, and sent it toward the southwest, while he himself went on to the mouth of the Bighorn river and erected a post.

It was during the autumn of 1823, and the following winter and spring that the rich beaver country of Green river valley, and possibly that of Great Salt Lake also, were invaded by the American traders for the first time since the ill-fated Astorians passed through them. The party dispatched by Henry to the southwest is believed to have been the first party of white men to have crossed *South Pass.* Tradition among the traders and trappers always ascribed the discovery of this pass to Provost, and there is little doubt of the fact; but of positive proof there is none. The date of discovery was probably late in the fall of 1823.

In the spring of 1824 Jedediah S. Smith set out on one of those expeditions which were so conspicuous a feature of his career, and went with a small party across the mountains to the headwaters of Snake river. He spent the summer and fall in that vicinity and meanwhile fell in with a small detached party of Hudson Bay trappers. From these he obtained in some way or other all their catch of beaver, one hundred skins, and then gave them the protection of his own party until they should find their leader, Alexander Ross. The Hudson Bay Company partisan was not much pleased with the way his men had been relieved of their fur, but he was forced to concede that the Americans were "shrewd men," and that Smith in particular was a "very intelligent person."

From this point, which was in the valley of Godin river northwest of Snake river, and on the outskirts of the great lava plain, Smith made his way north and is said to have passed the winter among the Flatheads. He visited one or more posts of the British company and gained the first positive information concerning operations in the Columbia valley that had been received since the Astorians left the country.

Smith returned to St. Louis in the summer or autumn of 1824, and gave such information as he had gathered to General Atkinson, who considered it of so much importance that he embodied it in a report to the War Department in the November following. In this report he refers to Smith as "an intelligent young man who was employed by General Ashley beyond the Rocky mountains."

In spite of the unfortunate beginning of the expedition of 1823 it was on the whole successful. When the detached trapping parties met in the mountains in 1824[9] they had collected a considerable quantity of beaver fur, which Henry took back to St. Louis. The results of the expedition were sufficiently favorable to justify his immediate return, and he left St. Louis on the 21st of October with a new expedition for the mountains. This departure, strange to say, is the very last word which we have of Andrew Henry in the fur trade. He evidently did not remain long in the mountains, but just when he left, or for what reason, is not known. Jedediah S. Smith took his place and remained Ashley's partner until 1826.

The doings of General Ashley from the close of the Aricara campaign to the return of Henry in the fall of 1824 are uncertain. He had a political campaign on hand, being a candidate for governor of Missouri, and that must have absorbed a large part of his time. James P. Beckwourth in his autobiography represents Ashley as actively engaged in equipping his expeditions. He sent a party in the fall of 1823 to collect horses among the Kansas and other Indians, and in the spring of 1824 set out with an expedition for the mountains. He had not gotten far from the Missouri when he was robbed of his horses on the Platte by the Pawnees, and was compelled to postpone his expedition until fall. In the meantime the election took place, in August, and Ashley was defeated.

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[9] This was the first of the famous annual rendezvous in the mountains.

By the fall of 1824 Ashley's plan of carrying on the business had undergone a complete change. Clinging to the past practice of the traders he had heretofore undertaken to conduct his business, in part, at least, from trading posts. He had already built two of these, one at the mouth of the Yellowstone, and one on that river near the mouth of the Bighorn. It was his plan to build two more on the Missouri — one at the mouth of the Marias and one at Three Forks. But like all his predecessors he failed to open trade relations with the Blackfeet, and found that the methods which worked so well on the lower river were ineffectual in the mountains. The explorations of Henry, Smith, and Provost in the southwest near Great Salt Lake had shown that that country abounded in beaver. Finally the Missouri Fur Company was pushing its own operations with great vigor toward the head of the Missouri, and constituted a formidable competition in that quarter. These considerations led Ashley to relinquish the Missouri river valley altogether and to carry his operations to the other side of the mountains. He likewise abandoned all efforts to conduct the trade from fixed points, and relied only upon itinerant parties made up mostly of trappers. As a consequence of this new method it became necessary to appoint some place of meeting where the various parties could assemble each year with the product of their work. Hence arose the well-known *rendezvous* of the mountains, one of the most interesting features of the fur trade. The new system was, as will be seen, eminently successful for a season.

After the close of Ashley's unsuccessful political campaign he devoted his time exclusively to his mountain business. Shortly after Henry's departure, October 21, 1824, he himself set out with a party and arrived at Council Bluffs about the 1st of November. Thence he ascended the Platte river and its South Fork until he reached the mountains.

He then made his way across the country, probably somewhat south of the line of the modern Union Pacific railway, until he reached the valley of Green river. As it was already winter when he arrived there he doubtless remained in the immediate neighborhood of the valley until spring.

The doings of Ashley and his parties during the ensuing winter and spring were of the highest importance to his business, and are of much historic interest as well. In the spring of 1825 Ashley made the first attempt ever made by white men to navigate Green river. It has been said that he thought that this stream emptied into the Gulf of Mexico — an idea which was generally accepted at the time. The long easterly course of the river just south of the Wyoming boundary might have led one to suppose that its outlet was to the eastward, and this view was further strengthened by the geographical information contained in the report of Lieutenant Pike, which was at that time the only published authority that touched upon the question. It is not at all likely, however, that Ashley's attempt at navigating Green river had any other end in view than the exploration of new territory for the prosecution of his business. But whatever may have been his intention, the experiment itself was a disastrous one. He made his perilous way through Brown's Hole, to the point where the river abandons its easterly course and thence for a considerable distance to the southwest, when his boat was totally wrecked in a cascade near the mouth of what is now Ashley river. Ashley inscribed his name on a rock near by, and the inscription was seen by Major J. W. Powell, of the U. S. Geological survey, forty-four years afterwards, when that gentleman was making his exploration of the Grand Cañon of the Colorado. Near the same spot Powell found an iron bake oven, a tin plate, and other wreckage which he thought might have been Ashley's, but probably were not.[11]

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[11] As a striking illustration of the extent to which oblivion has obscured the events of this time, the reference of Powell to Ashley's party is particularly interesting. The inscription which he found was "on

Being now to the south of the Uintah mountains and on the west bank of Green river, Ashley probably thought it better to make his way to the west and around by Great Salt Lake then to cross the rugged mountains which he had just traversed through the dark and precipitous cañons of the river. This may possibly have been his intention from the start. At any event, after the wreck he set out to the westward, and shortly after had the good luck to fall in with Etienne Provost, who had made his way into the valley of Green river by way of Great Salt Lake. While this meeting may possibly have been accidental, it was more probably a part of General Ashley's comprehensive plan of exploring the country, and that he had instructed Provost to make a circuit and meet him on the lower course of Green river.

The united parties now made their way westward across

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a high rock" and read "*Ashley 18-5.*" The third figure was illegible, but as nearly as Powell could make out it was 3 or 5. Of course it was 2, but Powell evidently believed it to be 5, as the following comment will show. "Though some of his companions were drowned, Ashley and one other survived the wreck, climbed the canon wall, and found their way across the Wasatch mountains to Salt Lake City, living chiefly on berries, as they wandered through an unknown and difficult country. When they arrived at Salt Lake they were almost destitute of clothing and nearly starved. The Mormon people gave them food and clothing and employed them to work on the foundation of the Temple until they had earned sufficient to leave the country. Of their subsequent history I have no knowledge. It is possible that they returned to the scene of the disaster, as a little creek entering the stream below is known as Ashley's creek, and it is reported that he built a cabin and trapped on this river for one or two winters."

Speaking of the evanescence of fame, here is indeed an example. Little did Ashley imagine that his romantic adventures, so celebrated in their day, and himself one of the leading public men of the West, would be so far forgotten in two score years that he would be referred to in a government report of high authority as an obscure hunter on whom the Mormons (so hated in Missouri in his time) took compassion and set to work on their Temple thirty years after he was in their country! *Sic transit gloria mundi!*

In reference to Ashley's shipwreck it is worthy of note that James P. Beckwourth claims the credit of having rescued the General from drowning.

the Wasatch mountains into the Salt Lake valley. This was already familiar ground to Provost, who had been there the year before and had suffered a disaster equal to that of Ashley at the Aricara villages. On the shore of Utah Lake, where that tributary enters which now bears the name (abbreviated) of Etienne Provost, this capable frontiersman was for once completely deceived by the Indians. He had fallen in with a band of Snake Indians under an evil-minded chief, Mauvais Gauche, and was invited to smoke the calumet of peace with them. The chief said that it was contrary to his medicine to have anything of a metallic character near by while the ceremony was going on, and requested that both parties should remove their weapons to a distance. Provost yielded to the chief's importunity, for he had learned that on the whole it was better to humor the superstitious whims of the Indians. Himself and his men placed their guns to one side, and sat down in the circle to smoke In the midst of the ceremony the Indians sprang up at a preconcerted signal and fell upon the whites with knives and tomahawks which they had kept concealed within their clothing. Most of the men were killed. Provost, who was a powerful and athletic man, extricated himself from his assailants, and with three or four others made his escape. This terrible event, which has few parallels in the history of the American Indians, made a deep impression upon the mountain men. They vowed vengeance upon the faithless chief, but that wily savage eluded their search and had not been caught as late as 1834. This was one of the very few instances of hostility between the Snakes and the whites.[12]

It was on this occasion that Ashley made his explorations south of Great Salt Lake. He went as far as Sevier Lake, which was then given the name of Ashley Lake. Historians have generally supposed that it was Utah Lake which was temporarily honored with the General's name, but this is not the case. It was on the shores of either Utah or Sevier Lake that the trading post stood which Ashley is said to have built.[13]

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[12] This account, which is from Ferris' *Life in the Rocky Mountains*, states that fifteen men were killed. Page 283, Letter book, Superintendency of Indian affairs, St. Louis, Mo., now in possession of the Kansas Historical Society, gives the number as 17, and happily confirms the event on the authority of Smith, Jackson and Sublette.

Having completed these explorations Ashley and Provost turned north en route to the annual rendezvous in the valley of Green river. At some point north of Great Salt Lake, and possibly in the beautiful mountain park known as Cache Valley, an event took place which marked the turning point in Ashley's fortunes. There was in this neighborhood at the time a party of Hudson Bay trappers under the leadership of the well-known trader, Peter Skeen Ogden. They were in possession of a large quantity of beaver fur variously estimated at from seventy to two hundred thousand dollars' worth. These furs, through some transaction now not positively known, came into Ashley's possession at an insignificant price — some say by looting a cache in which they were concealed, and some by voluntary sale to Ashley by Ogden to relieve the latter's necessities.[14] Be that as it may,

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[13] See list of posts, Appendix F.

[14] Common tradition among the traders, which has even survived to the present time, says that Ashley and Provost accidentally came upon a cache of Ogden's fur, and not feeling very well disposed toward the British on general principles, nor believing that they had any business in this quarter, promptly confiscated the fur. One authority says that Ogden was in great straits for some cause or other, and that he sold out to Ashley for a mere nominal sum in order to relieve his necessities. Wyeth says (*Sources of the History of Oregon*, vol. I., p. 74) that a "Mr. Gardner, one of his [Ashley's] agents, met a Mr. Ogden, clerk of the H. B. Co. in the Snake country at the head of a trapping party. Gardner induced the men of Ogden's party to desert by promises of supplies and good prices for furs. The furs thus obtained amounted to about 130 packs, or 13,000 pounds, worth at that time about $75,000." Beckwourth says that the furs cost Ashley "comparatively little." Audubon quotes Ashley as saying that the disaster at the Aricara villages "proved fortunate for him as it turned his steps toward some other spot where he procured a hundred packs of beaver skins for a mere song."

Of the main fact therefore there is no room for doubt; but the exact the event was an important one to Ashley. He is said to have been deeply involved in debt at that time, owing to his repeated disasters; but the returns of this year enabled him to pay off his debts and lay the foundations of a goodly fortune.

After the summer rendezvous, which took place in the valley of Green river, Ashley set out with his furs for St. Louis. Upon Provost's advice he went by way of South Pass to the Bighorn river, where he constructed bullboats and descended that stream and the Yellowstone to the Missouri. There he saw for the first time the fort, now in ruins, that Henry had built two years before. He reached the mouth of the Yellowstone on the 19th of August. Here by a most fortunate coincidence he met General Atkinson and Major O'Fallon, who had arrived two days before with a large military force on an official expedition to the various tribes of the Missouri. General Atkinson offered Ashley safe convoy for his furs to Council Bluffs if he would await the return of the expedition. Ashley accepted and accompanied the General on an excursion up the river in search of the Blackfeet and Assiniboines. They returned to the mouth of the Yellowstone August 26th, and on the following morning the whole party set out down the river. No incident of importance occurred on the home journey except that one of the keelboats loaded with Ashley's furs was wrecked on a snag near the mouth of James river, Dakota; the boat and all its cargo were saved. Council Bluffs was reached on the 19th of September. Ashley at this point parted with the military and after three days' rest, resumed his way down the river. He passed Franklin about the 1st of October, and probably reached St. Louis by the 8th. From St. Charles he sent a messenger across the country to

details will probably remain unknown until the world hears from Mr. Ogden through the records of the Hudson Bay Company. That Ogden should voluntarily have disposed of his furs at all, and particularly at a nominal price to an American rival, is scarcely credible to one who knows anything of the business methods of the British companies.

notify Wahrendorff and Tracy, his backers, of his great success.

On the 26th of October Ashley was married to Miss Eliza Christy, and four days later dispatched a party of seventy men to the mountains. Beckwourth, who had returned with Ashley, accompanied this party. He says that on this trip he took the North Fork of the Platte and went by way of South Pass, thus striking Green river much higher than the year before. Ashley remained in St. Louis during the winter.

The rendezvous for 1826 was fixed in Cache valley north of Great Salt Lake in the present state of Utah. Ashley set out for the mountains with another party on the 8th of March, 1826, and is presumed to have followed the route of the North Platte and South Pass. On this trip he took a six-pounder wheeled cannon through to Utah Lake and installed it in his post there.[15] This was the first wheeled vehicle of any description that crossed the plains north of the Santa Fe route.

This was the last journey that Ashley made to the mountains. He evidently had no great love for mountain life and was ambitious of political success. He looked to the mountains mainly for a fortune, and having now secured that he resolved to abandon further personal conduct of affairs there. This he could do without relinquishing his interest in the business. He had developed some of the ablest spirits of the fur trade, men of the highest worth, who later figured prominently in the history of the West. If he could turn over his affairs in the mountains to them, and himself conduct the St. Louis end of the business, it would be more to his own liking, and give these young men a start in their own names. Accordingly he made propositions to the ablest and most experienced of his lieutenants, Jedediah S. Smith, David E. Jackson, and William L. Sublette, and on the 18th day of July, 1826, articles of agreement were made and signed "near the Grand Lake west of the Rocky mountains." This instrument, which is still in existence,[16] constituted the firm of Smith, Jackson and Sublette, and marks the beginning of the second period in the history of the Rocky Mountain Fur Company. The agreement is principally confined to prices of goods, and to arrangements by which Ashley is to supply the firm with merchandise and to dispose of their furs. It also stipulated that Ashley was not to furnish any other company with merchandise so long as it continued in force.

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[15] All references to this event by historians place it in the year 1826, but Ashley himself says it was in 1827, although he did not go to the mountains after 1826.

Having completed his arrangements Ashley returned to St. Louis where he arrived on the 9th of September with one hundred and twenty-three packs of beaver. Beckwourth gives the very probable story that upon leaving the mountains Ashley made an affectionate farewell to his men, thanking them for their loyalty to his business and wishing them equal success in their own undertakings.

There was one man, however, who did not reciprocate the General's expressions of good will. This was Etienne Provost, the veteran mountaineer, who had first penetrated to the region of the Great Salt Lake. For some reason he had fallen out with Ashley, possibly from not being included in the new business arrangement. He forthwith set out for St. Louis, arriving there ahead of Ashley, and entered into negotiations with Bernard Pratte and Company by which he was to conduct a rival expedition to the mountains in the following year. Ashley, upon his arrival, nipped this opposition in the bud by himself offering Bernard Pratte and Company a share in his next expedition to the mountains. He agreed to accompany it himself and was to receive a high salary for this service, besides his share in the venture.

In the following April Ashley set out for the mountains but was taken sick on the frontier and compelled to return, leaving the party in other hands. In September following,

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[16] In the possession of M. L. Gray of St. Louis. For facsimile of signature see opposite this page.

when he judged that the return expedition must be near the frontier he left St. Louis to meet it. He returned on October 15th with one hundred and thirty packs of beaver. Smith, Jackson and Sublette had been able to pay off their indebtedness to Ashley and to lay the foundations of comfortable fortunes for themselves, while the net profits of the summer's expedition to Ashley and to Bernard Pratte and Company was seventy per cent.

The brilliant success of General Ashley fairly dazed the staid authorities on the fur trade in St. Louis, and disturbed not a little the equanimity of the great American Fur Company in New York. The correspondence of the traders at this time shows how completely Ashley had fired the minds of every one with visions of wealth no less real than if he had discovered mines of gold.[17] And there was much reason for it. He had brought down in 1824 one hundred packs, in 1826 one hundred and twenty-three packs, in 1827 one hundred and thirty packs. If we add reasonable returns for the years 1823 and 1824, he must have brought in something like five hundred packs of beaver, worth in St. Louis over a quarter of a million dollars. After deducting the cost of the expedition, and all losses, there still remained what at that period was an ample fortune for those engaged in the enterprise. Ashley had acquired a reputation as an authority on the Western fur trade that never afterward deserted him and in his subsequent career in Congress he was looked to as much as was Senator Benton for information upon all measures relating to the West.

[17] An interesting example is found in two letters written almost exactly a year apart by Mr. Bostwick, agent of the American Fur Co., to parties in New York. October 5, 1825, he wrote: "Gen. Ashley arrived here yesterday with (as rumor says) 100 packs of Rocky Mountain beaver weighing 9,700 pounds. There is no doubt of the fact. It is said to be of fine quality."

And September 21, 1826: "Fortune has again smiled upon the enterprise of General Ashley. He is within a few days' march of this place with 123 packs of beaver. There is no doubt of the truth of this report; it was brought by some men who came from the mountains with him."

CHAPTER XVII.

THE ROCKY MOUNTAIN FUR COMPANY.

ADVENTURES OF JEDEDIAH S. SMITH.

Smith's love of exploration — Starts for California — Trouble with Spanish authorities — Spends winter in California — Leaving party in California Smith returns to Salt Lake — Departs again for California — Party attacked by the Mojaves — Renewed difficulties with Spanish authorities — Spends winter on American Fork — Massacre of his party on the Umpquah — The Hudson Bay Company recovers Smith's property and pays him for it — Smith leaves Fort Vancouver to rejoin his partners — Meeting of the partners.

THE doings of the Rocky Mountain Fur Company while under the firm name of Smith, Jackson and Sublette, find their chief interest in the adventures of the senior member of the firm. Smith seems to have been in every way a remarkable man. A Christian and a soldier, the Bible and the rifle were his inseparable companions, and the mild teachings of the one never diminished in any way the vigor with which he used the other. The new West captivated his mind with its opportunities for adventure and he made the most of them during the ten years before his untimely death.

Immediately upon the conclusion of the business transactions of 1826 in which Ashley sold out to Smith, Jackson and Sublette, Smith set out on those long and perilous expeditions which absorbed his time for the next three years. Fortunately we have his own account of both of his California visits, which, with numerous sidelights, enable us to present a complete narrative of his wanderings.[1]

On the 22nd of August, 1826, Smith left the rendezvous near Great Salt Lake with a party of fifteen men for the purpose of exploring the country to the southwest, then wholly unknown to the American traders. His route lay by Utah Lake, thence across the Sevier valley to the Virgin river,[2] which he descended to the Colorado. Nothing of importance transpired on this part of his route except the discovery of a remarkable salt cave on the Virgin two days' march above its mouth. Smith crossed to the east bank of the Colorado and followed down the stream until he came upon the Mojave Indians with whom he remained fifteen days to recruit his stock of horses. Recrossing the Colorado at the end of this time he pursued a westerly course, with great hardship and suffering, across the barren and desolate wastes of southern California, and arrived at San Diego, probably about the middle of October.

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[1] See letter from Smith to General Clark, written at Great Salt Lake in the summer of 1827 and published in the *Missouri Republican* Octo-

In California Smith's principal difficulties were with the Spanish authorities, who viewed his presence there with suspicion, and hampered his movements by their arbitrary requirements. Through the interposition of Captain W. H. Cunningham of the *Courier*, of Boston, he obtained permission to purchase the supplies he needed and also to return by the route he had come. Smith was not disposed to leave at once a country which he had come so far to see, and moving back from the coast he turned northwest and traveled

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ber 11, 1827; a letter from Captain Cunningham of the ship *Courier* from Boston, dated San Diego, December, 1826, and published in the *Missouri Republican* October 25, 1827; and an account of Smith's second expedition to California in the letter book of Indian Affairs, Superintendency of St. Louis under General Clark, now in possession of the Kansas Historical Society at Topeka, Kansas. There are also numerous briefer references here and there. Bancroft has worked up in considerable detail the doings of the Americans in California during those early days, and as this territory is outside the scope of this work, they will not be touched upon farther than necessary to show when and where Smith was during his wanderings.

[2] Smith named this stream Adams river in honor of the President. I am inclined to think that its present name was given for Thomas Virgin who was with Smith in 1827, and was severely wounded by the Indians in this locality, and afterward killed in the fight on Umpquah river.

some three hundred miles parallel with the coast, and at a distance from it which he estimated at one hundred and fifty miles. He spent a good part of the winter on this journey and turned it to advantage in trapping. Spring found him in the vicinity of the headwaters of the San Joaquin and Merced rivers.

Early in May he attempted to take his party across Mt. Joseph, as he called the high range of the Sierra Nevada mountains, in order to return to the summer rendezvous of 1827 near Salt Lake; but the deep snows baffled his efforts. He then decided to leave most of his men in California while he should go to the rendezvous and return for them in the fall. With two men, seven horses, and two mules laden with provisions and forage, he set out on his perilous journey May 20, 1827. In eight days he succeeded in crossing the mountains with a loss of only two horses and one mule, the deep snow being hard enough to sustain the weight of the animals. Twenty days more took him to the southwestern extremity of Great Salt Lake along the western shore of which he then bent his course. He reached the rendezvous by the middle of June. The sufferings of the party in crossing the Salt Lake desert were terrible, and only two of the animals survived the journey.

There is no clue given in Smith's account as to the route followed, but it was certainly far south of the Humboldt river. He probably crossed the range near Sonora Pass, going north of Mono Lake and south of Walker Lake. He saw no lakes, but noted a stream flowing north, which was probably Walker river.

Immediately after the rendezvous, Smith set out, July 13, with a small party of eighteen men to return to California and bring back the men he had left there. He followed the route of the previous year and went direct to the Mojave Indians. Unfortunately, since his previous visit, the jealous Spaniard had been there and had warned the Mojaves not to permit any more Americans to pass that way. Smith was ignorant of this, and counting on their former friendly disposition, was somewhat off his guard. Upon his departure from the village, and while in the act of crossing the river on a raft, the Indians fell upon the party, killing ten men and capturing all the property and papers. This was in the month of August.

Smith now made his way with intense suffering and great peril to the Spanish settlements, which he reached at San Gabriel in nine and one-half days. Here he left two wounded men, and himself started north to join his party.

Two Indian guides whom Smith had secured to conduct him into southern California were seized by the authorities. One died under harsh treatment, and the other was sentenced to death. One of the wounded men, Thomas Virgin, who had been left at San Gabriel, was taken to San Diego and thrown into prison, but was finally released and sent to join Smith.

Upon arriving at the San Jose mission, Smith sought permission to visit the governor at Monterey, but the request was denied, and he was thrown into prison. Presently he was sent under guard to Monterey, where he encountered almost hopeless difficulties with the equivocating governor. Finally, sometime in November, through the intercession of the master of an American vessel, he was given permission to depart, after purchasing the necessary supplies, and was enjoined that he must leave Mexican territory.

The authorities refused to let Smith augment his party, although there were several Englishmen and Americans on the coast who wanted to join him. He left with a party of twenty men, two of whom soon deserted.[3] Two months was the period fixed within which he must depart from

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[3] In the party of 1826 were fifteen men of whom Smith left thirteen when he returned to rendezvous in the summer of 1827. He started back to California with eighteen men of whom he lost ten at the hands of the Mojaves, thus leaving eight, which with the thirteen already in California would make the twenty-one with whom he set out to return in December, 1827. This, however, supposes that there were no other losses than those mentioned, a rather improbable supposition, and Smith may have succeeded in procuring recruits.

Spanish territory, and the general route which he must follow was designated by the authorities. It so happened that this route would take him across the Buenaventura (Sacramento) river, which was then impassable from high water. Smith accordingly took the matter into his own hands, and resolved to pass the winter in that neighborhood. He followed slowly up the course of the river to its principal fork, where he passed several months. From this circumstance the stream came to be known as American Fork. On the 13th of April, 1828, Smith set out in a northwest direction. After reaching the coast he turned north and kept on without noteworthy incident until he reached the Umpquah river. His party did a good deal of trapping on the way, and by this time had secured a large quantity of fur. On the 14th of July Smith left the party in camp and went out alone to search for a road. On his way back he was fired on by some Indians, and although he escaped it was only to find his camp and all the property in the hands of the savages. Fifteen of his men were killed, and only three, including a Mr. Black, escaped.[4] The survivors had fled north, and Smith was left entirely alone. He made his way in a state of utter destitution to Fort Vancouver, on the Columbia, where he found his companions. The Hudson Bay Company authorities received him with every consideration of generosity, and even sent a force under Thomas McKay to punish the Indians and to recover his property. They succeeded in getting nearly all of it. Doctor McLoughlin charged for this service only the value of the men's time at the rate of sixty dollars a year and four dollars apiece for such horses as were lost on the trip. He purchased Smith's furs, amounting to about $20,000 worth, at the market price, giving him a draft on London in payment.

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[4] Smith says that only Mr. Black escaped, but all other authorities, including particularly Dr. John McLoughlin, the Hudson Bay factor at Fort Vancouver, say three besides Smith. This is probably correct, for Smith's party which numbered 21 when it started from near San Francisco, and lost 2 by desertion, must have numbered 19 on the Umpquah. The number 15 lost checks with the 4 escaped.

Smith remained at Vancouver until March 12, 1829, when he set out for the East to rejoin his partners. He ascended the Columbia, and followed the British fur traders' route to their post among the Flatheads, which Smith had visited in 1824. Thence he and his man Black started south for Snake river. On his way he met Jackson, who was looking for him, and a little later found Sublette, "on the 5th of August, 1829, at the Tetons on Henry Fork, the south branch of the Columbia."

Such is the simple statement as given by Smith himself of his three years' explorations. Much has been written about them, mostly imaginary, and many are the reputed heroic exploits connected with them. That the expeditions were full of romantic interest and thrilling adventure can not be doubted; nor that the little parties, and particularly their leader, endured great hardship and privations. The important results of Smith's work in the cause of geographical discovery will be considered in the following chapter.

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE ROCKY MOUNTAIN FUR COMPANY.

ITS LATER HISTORY.

Operations of Sublette and Jackson during Smith's absence — Meeting with Smith — Plan of operations — Attacked by the Blackfeet — Trappers assemble on Wind river — Sublette goes to St. Louis — The spring hunt of 1830 — Sublette's journey from the states — Rendezvous of 1830 — Change in business management — Extinction of the firm of Smith, Jackson and Sublette — Fall hunt of 1830 — Fitzpatrick and Ogden — Winter encampment on Powder river — Spring hunt of 1831 — Fitzpatrick goes to St. Louis and thence to Santa Fe — Fitzpatrick fails to appear at Green river rendezvous — Partners meet in Powder river valley — Opposition of the American Fur Company — Fitzpatrick and Bridger go to head of Snake river — Partners move south to Bear river — Vanderburgh and Drips appear — Rendezvous at Pierre's Hole — Fitzpatrick goes after Sublette — His adventures on his way back — Sublette reaches the rendezvous — Battle of Pierre's Hole — Small party leaves Pierre's Hole — Attacked by Blackfeet — Break-up of the rendezvous — Change in the mountain trade — Fatal results of business rivalry — Rendezvous of 1833 on Green river — Campbell, Sublette and Wyeth set out for St. Louis via the Bighorn river — Robbery of Fitzpatrick and Wyeth — Deplorable state of trade in the mountains — Rendezvous of 1834 — Dissolution of the Rocky Mountain Fur Company — Review of its work — Albert Gallatin's map.

THE whereabouts of Jackson and Sublette during Smith's absence are not fully recorded. At the rendezvous of 1827 they agreed with Smith to meet him at the head of Snake river in the summer of 1829, and in the meanwhile they continued the business as before, going annually to St. Louis with the furs. In the summer of 1828 Sublette went to St. Louis alone, while Jackson remained in the mountains during the winter. In the spring of 1829 Sublette returned with a large party and outfit of merchandise. The rendezvous for this year was fixed on the Popo Agie river which enters Wind river near the point where the latter stream turns from its southeast course to the north. Forty-two packs of furs were collected here and sent back to St. Louis, arriving there September 5th. Milton G. Sublette was then dispatched with a well-appointed outfit to work up the country along the Bighorn river, while William L. Sublette went on to the beautiful valley of Snake river at the eastern base of the Teton mountains, where he expected to meet Smith and Jackson. Here he found Jackson, who had been there for some time, and had perhaps wintered there. and it is most likely from this date that the name *Jackson Hole* came to be applied to the valley.[1] As Smith failed to put in an appearance, the partners set out to find him. They crossed the mountains into Pierre's Hole and Sublette remained in the vicinity of Henry Fork, while Jackson started in the direction of the Flathead country, thinking that Smith might be returning by that route. He was right in this conjecture, and soon after fell in with Smith and Black. The two partners then started for Sublette's camp, where they arrived, as already narrated, August 5th, 1829. This was perhaps the first time that the beautiful valley of Pierre's Hole came prominently to the notice of American traders.

The united parties remained in Pierre's Hole some time before commencing their fall hunt. In spite of Smith's rough experiences and his several disasters, his work had nevertheless been fairly successful. The humane and generous action of Dr. McLoughlin had saved him the results of his arduous labors, where the code of competition might properly have deprived him of it, and, if he did not bring to his associates a goodly lot of furs, he had in his pocket securities which were even better.

Smith's Christian nature would not permit the benevolent McLoughlin to outdo him in generosity, and he insisted that the fall hunt of himself and his associates should be made east of the Continental Divide, so as not to trespass upon the territory which the Hudson Bay Company claimed as belonging commercially to them.[2]

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[1] For a description of this valley see Part V., Chapter II.

The other parties reluctantly consented, and all set out on their fall hunt in October, taking a northeasterly direction toward the Yellowstone, with the intention of swinging round into the Bighorn basin, where Milton Sublette had been left. Just as they were starting they had a slight brush with the Blackfeet Indians, who attempted to steal their horses. It was a little too early in the morning, before the horses had been turned out to graze, and the Indians were beaten off through the energetic action of Fitzpatrick.

While crossing the range of mountains between the Gallatin and Yellowstone rivers, a little to the north of the modern National Park, they had a severe skirmish with the Blackfeet, in which two men were killed, and the rest of the party scattered. It was some time before they all came together again, in fact not until they were east of the mountains and in the Bighorn basin. The journey through the rugged mountains bordering the park on the north was one of great peril and suffering. One of the party, Joseph Meek, became separated from the rest and utterly lost, wandering into the hot springs country just east of the Yellowstone river, where he was found by some of his companions.

At length the party were re-united in the Bighorn basin, where they found Milton Sublette, and all together went south with their furs to the valley of Wind river. It being too late to carry the furs to St. Louis, they were cached in the side of a cut bank. This locality was fixed as the next rendezvous, and thereupon Sublette, with one man, set out for St. Louis to bring out the outfit for the following year. It was about Christmas time that he started on his journey, and he reached his destination on the 11th of February following.[3] This is one of the very few examples at this early day of crossing the plains in the dead of winter.

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[2] Original data on the doings of this year are exceedingly few and I have mainly relied on Mrs. Victor's *River of the West* for them as also for numerous details relating to the three following years.

The party which remained behind was too large to find subsistence in one locality, there being no buffalo in the vicinity, and Smith and Jackson were compelled to shift their camp, although in mid-winter, to better ground. They accordingly went over into the Powder river country, where they found buffalo and spent the winter in plenty. On the 1st of April Jackson set out for a spring hunt at his old stamping ground in Jackson Hole, while Smith, with young Jim Bridger as guide, started by way of the Yellowstone for the upper Missouri. Smith went as far as to the Judith basin, made a successful hunt, and returned to the rendezvous on Wind river without any untoward accident. Jackson likewise came back after a successful hunt, and here the two partners waited the arrival of Sublette from the States.[4] At about this time an unfortunate accident occurred. While removing the furs from the cache made the previous December, the bank caved in, killing one man and severely injuring another.

Sublette left St. Louis April 10th with eighty-one men mounted on mules, ten wagons with merchandise drawn by five mules each, two dearborns of one mule each, and twelve head of cattle and one milch cow for their support until they should reach the buffalo country. This was the advent of wagons on the Oregon Trail, although they had already been used for eight years on the Santa Fe Trail. The party arrived at rendezvous on the 16th of July without any difficulty, and the letter of the partners referred to in the above note says that "here the wagons could easily have crossed the Rocky mountains, it being what is called the *Southern Pass,* had it been desirable for them to do so."[5]

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[3] The following interesting scrap, referring to Sublette's arrival, taken from the correspondence of the times shows the unaccommodating attitude of rival traders toward each other. Chouteau, writing to Astor, thus refers to Sublette's arrival: "Je l'ai beaucoup questionné. Je n'ai rien obtenu de satisfaisant. Il me regard toujours comme un opponent."

[4] For a description of the journey to rendezvous in 1830 I rely upon a joint letter of Smith, Jackson and Sublette to the Hon. John H. Eaton, Secretary of War, dated St. Louis, Oct. 29, 1830, and published in Sen. Doc. 39, 21st Cong., 2nd Sess.

The business of the rendezvous was this year particularly important. Smith, Jackson and Sublette, following the example of Ashley four years before, relinquished their trade and sold out to several younger men, who had now become distinguished by their ability and experience. These were Thomas Fitzpatrick, Milton G. Sublette, Henry Fraeb, Jean Baptiste Gervais, and James Bridger, and the new firm was called the Rocky Mountain Fur Company, the only instance where any firm did business under this specific name. The transfer of the business from the old to the new firm took place August 4, 1830. Smith, Jackson, and Sublette left the same day for St. Louis with one hundred and ninety packs of beaver. They arrived October 10th, bringing back the ten wagons, four of the cattle, and the milch cow.

In the following year they embarked in the Santa Fe trade, but Smith was slain in the Cimarron desert by the Comanches soon after and the firm was thus dissolved. Jackson formed a partnership with David E. Waldo, and is said to have taken a party soon after to California. He here disappears from the field of our inquiries. Sublette returned to St. Louis and for several years supplied the Rocky Mountain Fur Company with their outfits and brought back and marketed their furs.

The history of the new Rocky Mountain Company during the four years of its existence is difficult to trace. It carried on a wild and roving trade, and its numerous bands of trappers overspread the entire mountain region. No attempt will be made to do more than follow the wanderings of the more important parties.

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[5] The writers refer to the rendezvous as being at the "head of Wind river," which, with the above statement that it was near the Southern Pass, is somewhat confusing. It is possible that the "head of Wind river" was the head of the Popo Agie, and that Southern Pass was the South Pass at the head of the Sweetwater where that name was always thereafter applied. The rendezvous would hardly have been fixed at the head of Wind river near either of the two passes to be found there.

As soon as Smith, Jackson, and Sublette had left the Wind river rendezvous in August, 1830, the new firm organized its campaign for the ensuing autumn. Fraeb and Gervais led a party south into the mountains of Colorado, and nothing is known of their exact whereabouts until the next rendezvous. Fitzpatrick, Sublette, and Bridger, with a party of over two hundred men, moved north through the Bighorn basin, crossed the Yellowstone river, and continued in a northwesterly direction until they reached the Missouri river in the vicinity of the Great Falls. Turning south they ascended the Missouri to the Three Forks, and then followed the Jefferson Fork to the Divide. The expedition was a successful one, and a large quantity of furs was taken, while the formidable appearance of the party kept the Blackfeet from attacking it.

Crossing the Divide the trappers continued their course south for several hundred miles, and finally reached Ogden's Hole on the northeast shore of Great Salt Lake. Here, it is said, they fell in with Peter Skeen Ogden, the same Hudson Bay Company trader whom Ashley had relieved of his furs five years before. Fitzpatrick proceeded without delay to follow his old leader's example, if not in method, at least in the results obtained. As the Hudson Bay Company did not permit the use of liquor in the trade, except along the international boundary, Ogden was quite helpless to oppose Fitzpatrick, who, without the slightest scruple, debauched his men with liquor and soon secured the product of a year's hunt for comparatively nothing. After this profitable but discreditable stroke of business the party left Ogden's Hole and crossed the country to the eastward in time to reach the valley of Powder river before winter set in. An idea of the lengthy journeys which these parties were wont to make may be had from the present instance in which the distance traveled by Fitzpatrick and his party during their fall hunt could not have been less than twelve hundred miles.

The Powder river valley was always a favorite wintering ground, because game, especially buffalo, was usually plentiful there, and the grazing was good. The partners remained there all winter, excepting Fraeb and Gervais, who returned to their hunting grounds in the south. During the winter an express was sent to St. Louis.

With the opening of the spring of 1831 the partners again set out for the Blackfoot country, but they had not gone far when most of their horses were stolen by the Crows. A catastrophe of this kind, so fatal to the mobility of a party, destroyed its effectiveness, and it was imperative to retake the horses. A party was organized for this purpose, and, after considerable delay and a good deal of adroit management, succeeded not only in retaking their own horses, but in capturing those belonging to the Indians.

Shortly after this affair Fitzpatrick left with one man for St. Louis to bring out the annual supplies to the rendezvous appointed for this year in Green river valley. He traveled by land and passed Council Bluffs about April 19th. Upon his arrival at St. Louis he was prevailed upon to accompany Smith, Jackson, and Sublette to Santa Fe, from which point he would take his outfit to the rendezvous. Under this unfortunate arrangement he accompanied the disastrous expedition in which Smith lost his life, and finally, after long and vexatious delays, he left Santa Fe with his merchandise, still almost as far from the rendezvous as he was at St. Louis. He traveled north along the eastern base of the mountains and reached the North Platte river near the mouth of the Laramie late in the year.

In the meanwhile Sublette and Bridger prosecuted their spring hunt, swinging round among the mountains on very much the same circuit as that followed in the previous autumn. In due time they reached the place of rendezvous on Green river, where they met Fraeb and Gervais, who had now been absent for about a year. As Fitzpatrick did not appear it was decided that Fraeb should go to meet him. After a long search and a good deal of wandering among the Black Hills, he finally met Fitzpatrick just as the latter arrived at Platte river. Sublette and Bridger, despairing of seeing Fitzpatrick, had already broken up the rendezvous and betaken themselves to the Powder river country for the winter. Hither Fitzpatrick and Fraeb bent their course, and in a short time the five partners were again gathered together.

Their prospects for a quiet winter in the plentiful country of Powder river were not to be realized. A cloud of black portent was gathering in the hitherto unclouded horizon of the company's affairs. It was at about this time that they began to feel the presence of that rival who finally drove them out of the business. In another chapter will be given an account of the steady and resistless progress of the American Fur Company up the Missouri and into the mountains, where it sought to share the rich harvest hitherto garnered by the Rocky Mountain traders alone. Its first essays in the mountains were conducted by three partisans, Vanderburgh, Drips, and Fontenelle, whose names became familiar in the annals of the trade. The policy of these leaders when they first entered the country was to follow the parties of the Rocky Mountain Fur Company and learn from them where the best trapping country lay. It was an underhand method of conducting business, and it led to some desperate and tragic situations.

It was in the fall of 1831 and in the Powder river country that the tactics of these interlopers became apparent. Vanderburgh and Drips had followed hard upon the trail of Fraeb and Fitzpatrick and went into camp in their immediate neighborhood. Fitzpatrick and his associates, indignant at this action, quietly stole out of the country, and by forced marches traveled west for upwards of four hundred miles to the forks of Snake river, having fixed their next rendezvous in the valley of Pierre's Hole. They spent the winter trading with the Flathead and Nez Perce Indians, unannoyed by the presence of their competitors.

Early in the year 1832, the most eventful year in the

Rocky Mountain fur trade, Fitzpatrick and his partners set out upon their spring hunt. Their course lay up the valley of the Snake to the mouth of Salt river and up the latter stream for a distance, when they crossed over into the valley of John Gray (now called John Day) river. Ascending this stream to its source, the party passed over a range of mountains into the valley of Bear river. Here, to their disgust, they found Vanderburgh and Drips, who were evidently trying to find them. It was resolved to strike off into some other section at once. Sublette unluckily was severely wounded in an affray with an Indian, and was compelled to stay behind. Joseph Meek remained to take care of him, and it was not until several months afterward that he was able to rejoin his companions, who, after their spring hunt, had assembled at the annual rendezvous in the valley of Pierre's Hole.[6]

Here, to their infinite vexation, Vanderburgh and Drips turned up again, and as it would soon be time for the various bands of trappers and Indians to assemble, it was of the utmost importance to receive the annual convoy of goods from St. Louis before their rivals should capture the trade. William L. Sublette had contracted to bring out the outfit, and in order to hurry him up it was decided that Fitzpatrick should go to meet him. He set out at once and met Sublette on the Platte river below the mouth of the Laramie, a distance of some four hundred miles from Pierre's Hole. On their way back, June 13, Fitzpatrick hired a party of men at Laramie river belonging to the firm of Gant and Blackwell, who had experienced a most unfortunate campaign at trapping during the previous winter.

When the joint party arrived at the Sweetwater, Fitzpatrick went on ahead entirely alone to carry the news of Sublette's approach to rendezvous. It was a hazardous enterprise in that dangerous country. Fitzpatrick led a very fleet horse already saddled and equipped, while he rode another, so that the first might be at all times fresh for a chase if necessary. Everything went well until he reached the valley of Green river, where he came suddenly upon a party of Blackfeet Indians. Mounting the led horse he galloped to the mountains and concealed himself in a defile. After waiting three days he came out from his retreat only to fall in with the Indians again. This time he lost his other horse in making his escape together with all the equipments which were attached to his saddle. Even his blankets were lost, and he saved only his rifle and the single charge which it contained. He barely succeeded in saving himself by crawling among the rocks and cliffs of the mountains. Here he remained for several days, when he finally emerged and made his way on foot in utter destitution toward the rendezvous. His sole resource for food must have been berries and roots. His moccasins wore out and he made others with his hat. In swimming one of the rivers, probably the Snake, he lost his rifle. At length, when nearly used up, he was met by two Iroquois hunters, who helped him to rendezvous on one of their horses. He arrived so emaciated as scarcely to be recognized. Sublette was already there, and the partners were thoroughly alarmed over his absence.

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[6] For a description of this beautiful valley, see Part V., Chapter II.

The caravan of William L. Sublette reached the rendezvous on the 8th of July. There were already present the various parties of the Rocky Mountain Fur Company numbering between one and two hundred men. The American Fur Company was represented by a large party under Vanderburgh and Drips. Nathaniel J. Wyeth[7] with his raw New Englanders was there, while the neighboring plains were covered with the tents of free trappers and bands of Indians. The trading proceeded briskly and much to the advantage of the Rocky Mountain Fur Company, for Fontenelle had not yet arrived with the annual supplies for Vanderburgh and Drips, and they were therefore not well prepared to compete with their rivals.

On the 17th of July the rendezvous began to break up. Milton Sublette was to lead a party into the country north

[7] See Chapter XXV., this Part.

of the Salt Lake desert. As his route would lie for a long distance in the valley of Snake river, Wyeth decided to accompany him for protection as far as their ways ran together. A free trapper by the name of Sinclair with fifteen men also started with them. The first day they proceeded about eight miles up the valley, intending to bear off to the south on the following morning. Just as they were about to resume their march, July 18, they saw Indians approaching, who proved to be a band of the dreaded Gros-ventres. A parley ensued during which Antoine Godin killed a chief who had come forward, and thus precipitated the Battle of Pierre's Hole, which raged the remainder of the day. It was a hard fought struggle, and the most noted battle between the Indians and the traders that ever took place in the mountains. Among the casualties on the part of the whites was the partisan Sinclair killed, and William L. Sublette wounded. The Blackfeet withdrew during the night.[8]

This unexpected event delayed the departure from the rendezvous. On the 25th of July a portion of Wyeth's party, who had decided to return home, became impatient of delay, and set out with Alfred K. Stephens and a small party of free trappers for Jackson Hole. The next day they were attacked by the Blackfeet, and two of their party were killed, while Stephens was mortally wounded.

Milton Sublette and Gervais, with Sinclair's free trappers and Wyeth's reduced party, left on the 24th. William L. Sublette's wound had so far healed that he was enabled to start for St. Louis on the 30th. He took with him a large pack train and one hundred and sixty-eight packs of beaver. Fitzpatrick and Bridger left for the headwaters of the Missouri hoping to elude their rivals. Vanderburgh and Drips set out in all haste, August 2nd, to find Fontenelle and secure their equipment, before Fitzpatrick and Bridger should get too far away. They found Fontenelle on Green river, August 8th, and four days later started back to

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[8] For a full account of this battle see Part IV., Chapter II.

Pierre's Hole. Fraeb probably went back to the sources of Grand river in the Colorado mountains.

The rendezvous in Pierre's Hole was one of the most important of those singular gatherings ever held in the mountains, and it marked the turning point in the Rocky mountain trade. A great change was beginning to come over the business. The field was no longer to the Rocky Mountain Fur Company alone. The powerful opposition of the American Fur Company had evidently come to stay. Wyeth had entered the country, and although his present opposition amounted to nothing, there was no telling what a man of his energy might not yet accomplish. Finally, there was Captain Bonneville, backed by New York capitalists, invading the mountains with a formidable party. The opposition of the Hudson Bay Company was nothing to that now pouring in from the East. The old order of things was gone. Henceforth there was to be bitter competition, all the more to be dreaded because it most likely meant the ruin of the business.

It is needless to follow in detail the wanderings of the various parties who left the rendezvous of Pierre's Hole in 1832. Milton Sublette and Gervais spent the summer and autumn in the country to the southwest. Fitzpatrick and Bridger, in their trapping ground on Jefferson Fork, soon had the mortification to find Vanderburgh and Drips on their trail again. They had offered at rendezvous to divide the trapping territory with them, but this offer had been declined, probably because the newcomers preferred to use their experienced rivals to pilot them to the best beaver country. Fitzpatrick and Bridger promptly pulled up their stakes and sought again to get away, but to no purpose. Becoming utterly exasperated they resolved to lead their opponents a chase which would teach them a lesson. Plunging into the very heart of the Blackfoot country they lured their rivals from one point to another until they were attacked by the Indians and Vanderburgh was slain.[9] Bridger was himself attacked soon after and barely escaped with his life. He received a severe wound and carried an arrowhead in his back for two years after.

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[9] For the story of this lamentable tragedy see Part IV., Chapter III.

Winter found the various parties of the Rocky Mountain Fur Company, except possibly that of Fraeb, again together in the Snake river valley. In the following spring they made their usual hunt and in due time gathered at the annual rendezvous appointed for this year (1833) at the head of Green river. This was another great gathering,[10] for besides the two leading companies there were present Captain Bonneville's company, numerous free trappers, a party of sportsmen under an English officer, Captain Stuart,[11] Nathaniel J. Wyeth, then on his way back home, and Robert Campbell, with a party and outfit just from St. Louis — in all about three hundred white men. There was besides a small village of Snake Indians. The rendezvous was in full activity as early as June 15th, and continued until June 24th.

On the latter date Robert Campbell, Fitzpatrick, and Milton Sublette, with fifty-five packs of beaver, accompanied by Nathaniel J. Wyeth and Captain Stuart, left for the Bighorn river. It was intended to return to St. Louis by way of the Yellowstone and Missouri rivers, probably in order to meet William L. Sublette, who was coming up the river this year with a strong outfit in opposition to the American Fur Company. Wyeth says that this route was selected because of the danger from the Aricara Indians, who were at this time infesting the Platte route with their marauding parties. At a point on the Bighorn river, where a stop was made to prepare bullboats for the further journey by water, and where Fitzpatrick parted company with Campbell and Milton Sublette, a contract was entered into between the Rocky Mountain Fur Company and Nathaniel J. Wyeth, August 14th, 1833, by which the latter agreed to bring out three thousand dollars' worth of merchandise to their rendezvous on Green river in the following year. Sublette, Campbell, and Wyeth then went on by boat and arrived in due time at the mouth of the Yellowstone, where they met W. L. Sublette with his opposition outfit. Campbell and Milton Sublette remained behind with him and Wyeth went on alone.

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[10] "I should have been proud of my countrymen if you could have seen the American Fur Company or the party of Mr. Campbell. For efficiency of goods, men, animals and arms I do not believe the fur business has afforded a better example." Wyeth at Green river rendezvous 1833, July 18.

In spite of this excellent character, however, Wyeth expressed his opinion in the same letter that things were in such a state that life was unsafe and that there was "a great majority of scoundrels" among the various companies.

[11] This Captain Stuart is often mentioned in the correspondence of the fur trade and he was much liked by the mountain men. His full name and title, as given by a contemporary authority, was Sir William Drummond Stuart, Bart. His home was in Perthshire, Scotland, where he lived for many years after his adventures in America. There is a tradition that he published a journal of his experiences. If he did, the work would be well worth reading, as it could not fail to be useful historical authority.

In the same party with Captain Stuart was another character also frequently mentioned. This was Dr. Benjamin Harrison, who had gone to the mountains apparently to recuperate his health. He was a son of Gen. William Henry Harrison.

The various bands of trappers now scouring the mountains made their usual fall hunt, doing everything that they could to hamper each other's movements. Only one incident of the fall campaign will be noticed and that because it illustrates so well the desperate measures which the fur companies were now using toward each other. After Fitzpatrick had bidden goodbye to his associates on the Bighorn river he set out for the valley of Tongue river, where he expected to find the Crow village, in order to secure their permission to make his fall hunt in their country. "But before I had time," says Fitzpatrick, "for form or ceremony of any kind, they robbed me and my men of everything we possessed."[12]

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[12] "A letter from Captain Stuart near the Crow village in September states . . . that Fitzpatrick was robbed of *100 horses, all his mer-*

Fitzpatrick openly charged the American Fur Company with having instigated this outrage; the Indians confessed the fact and the company's agent admitted it, and still the only evidence of any restitution that has come to our notice is in the following extract from a letter by McKenzie to Samuel Tulloch, agent of the company among the Crows, dated Fort Union, January 8, 1834: "The 43 Beaver skins traded, marked, 'R. M. F. Co.,' I would in the present instance give up if Mr. Fitzpatrick wishes to have them, on his paying the price the articles traded for them were worth on their arrival in the Crow village, and the expense of bringing the beaver in and securing it. My goods are brought in to the country to trade and I would as willingly dispose of them to Mr. Fitzpatrick as to any one else for beaver or beaver's worth, if I get my price. I make this proposal as a favor, not as a matter of right, for I consider the Indians entitled to trade any beaver in their possession to me or to any other trader." A most condescending "favor," to be sure! After having instigated the robbery, and then having gotten the plunder, to restore it to its rightful owner upon payment of its value in the Indian trade, was a mark of generosity which ought not to be omitted from the credit of the American Fur Company!

But if the Rocky Mountain Fur Company had just cause for indignation at this outrageous treatment, they were on their part equally careless of their own business obligations. Milton Sublette went to Boston during the following winter, and under his direction and advice Wyeth made up the invoice of merchandise which he had contracted to take to the mountains. In the following summer these two gentlemen were crossing the plains together on their way to the Green river rendezvous. Unfortunately Sublette was compelled to go back on account of illness. William L. Sublette in the meanwhile strained every nerve to reach the

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chandise, some beaver and traps, his capote, and even his watch. That party can consequently make no hunt this fall." Kenneth McKenzie to Pierre Chouteau, Fort Union, December 10, 1833.

mountains ahead of Wyeth. In this he succeeded and induced Fitzpatrick to refuse to stand by his bargain with Wyeth. The latter was thus left with a large quantity of merchandise on his hands which he had brought to this point under a written agreement with the company who now arbitrarily refused to receive it.

Outrages of this sort show to what a state the fur trade had now degenerated. Unrestrained competition had filled the mountains with rival companies, each using every effort, regardless of honor, to undermine the power of the rest. It became as much as one's life was worth to change service from one company to another, and it is stated that murders were committed on account of these rivalries. The Indians were utterly demoralized by the strange conduct of the whites toward each other and of course lost all confidence in them. They became more lawless and less industrious, and even the friendly tribes could no longer be depended upon.

In proportion as these unfavorable conditions increased the profits of the trade fell off, and the Rocky Mountain Fur Company could now clearly see that its business was on the decline. It was, moreover, the dupe of those on whom it had placed its chief reliance. The elder Sublette and his partner, Robert Campbell, were shrewdly drawing into their own hands the profits of the trade. By virtue of their arrangements with the Mountain Company for bringing out supplies and marketing the furs, they controlled the entire situation and turned into their own coffers the hard-earned profits of others.[13]

It was amid discouraging conditions like these that the Rocky Mountain Fur Company met in annual rendezvous in the summer of 1834. A dissolution of the partnership was agreed upon. Henry Fraeb sold out his interest for "forty head of horse beast, forty beaver traps, eight guns, and one thousand dollars' worth of merchandise." Gervais followed suit "in consideration of twenty head of horse beast, thirty beaver traps, and five hundred dollars' worth of merchandise." The remaining partners formed a new firm under the style of Fitzpatrick, Sublette and Bridger, assuming all responsibilities of the old company. This firm is scarcely known in the history of the times and continued only for a very brief time. It may be doubted if it was a legal partnership at all, for it was formed without the knowledge or consent of one of the members, M. G. Sublette, who was absent at the time and whose signature to the instrument evidencing the agreement was put in by some one else.

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[13] Significant of this fact is the following letter from Nathaniel J. Wyeth to M. G. Sublette, Ham's Fork, July 1st, 1834, after Fitzpatrick had refused to stand by Wyeth's contract with Sublette. "Now, Milton, business is closed between us, but you will find that you have only bound yourself over to receive your supplies at such a price as may be inflicted upon you, and that all you will ever make in this country will go to pay for your goods. You will be kept, as you have been, a mere slave to catch beaver for others."

The annual rendezvous in Green river valley in the summer of 1834 marks the end of the career of the Rocky Mountain Fur Company.[14] Fitzpatrick, Sublette and Bridger in the following year bought out the post built by Sublette and Campbell in the fall of 1834 on the Laramie and entered the service of the American Fur Company. In 1836 Milton Sublette died and the firm was dissolved, the surviving partners taking individual service with the great company on the Missouri.

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[14] The firm of Sublette and Campbell can not be considered as a Rocky Mountain Company but rather as an opposition to the American Fur Company on the Missouri. Its history will be considered with that of the latter company.

The document here reproduced (see page 864) marks as definitely the end of the Rocky Mountain Fur Company as did Ashley's advertisement in 1822 its beginning. A letter written by Lucien Fontenelle at Bellevue to Pierre Chouteau September 17, 1834, discusses several interesting points in the present connection and is one of the very few surviving letters written by that romantic character: "I arrived here three days ago with my expedition and returns from the mountains for the last year. I shall be able in a few days more to ship the beaver down. I am waiting for the boat which is now building at the Oto post. It is probable that you may wish to have the beaver insured and I am extremely sorry that I can not give you the correct weight. However, the number of skins I have amount to 5,309 beaver, 90 of otter, 18 of bear, 130 of muskrats, and about 150 pounds of castorum. I hardly think it necessary to have them insured, although the river is very low, but the boat will be very strong, and will have a double crew formed of the very best kind of voyageurs under the eyes of Mr. Cabanne, and the superintendence of Etienne Provost.

From the date of Ashley's first essay in the fur trade to the dissolution of the Rocky Mountain Fur Company was a period of only twelve years. What did the company accomplish during this short time, and what is its proper place in western history?

In the matter of trade it opened up one of the wealthiest

"I am sorry to say that I would have sent down more beaver had it not been for the misfortune of losing a cache in which there were eight or ten packs lost, destroyed by wolves and bears, and eight or ten packs more which we have lost by the rascality of a few men, who were largely indebted to us and who traded their fall's hunt with other companies during the winter as it happened they did not winter near any of our parties. I am in hopes that it will not so happen in the future as I have so arranged that it will be hard for any of them to defraud us hereafter.

"You must have heard before this of the returns that were made by Mr. Sublette and the company of Bonneville and Company. The latter I think by next year will be at an end with the mountains. They have sent down from twelve to fourteen packs of beaver and admitting that it should sell at a high price it is not enough to pay their retiring hands. Wm. Sublette takes down about forty packs. The heretofore arrangements between him and Messrs. Fitzpatrick, Milton Sublette and others having expired last spring, they have concluded not to have anything more to do with William Sublette and it will surprise me much if he takes more than ten packs down next year. I have entered into a partnership with the others and the whole of the beaver caught by them is to be turned over to us by agreement made with them in concluding the arrangement. William Sublette has built such a fort as Fort Clark (Mandans) on Laramie's Fork of the River Platte and can make it a central place for the *Sioux* and *Cheyenne* trade. He has now men running after these Indians to bring them to the River Platte. Buffalo is in abundance on that river during all seasons of the year, and the situation may turn out to be an advantageous one for the trade." . . .

Fontenelle.

fur sections of the West. Its operations were confined almost exclusively to the procuring of beaver fur and this was mainly obtained by its own trappers rather than by trade from the Indians. From all available data it is probable that this company under its various names procured and shipped to St. Louis upwards of a thousand packs of beaver worth about five hundred thousand dollars. Through the business arrangements by which the trade was conducted most of the profits found their way into the pockets of the St. Louis parties, particularly Ashley and William L. Sublette. Milton Sublette, Fitzpatrick, Gervais, Fraeb and Bridger evidently made no great amount of money. They did the work and endured the hardships, but their earnings served mainly to augment the fortunes of others.

As a school of adventure the Rocky Mountain Fur Company had no parallel among the business concerns of the mountains. The campaign with the Aricaras, the adventures of Hugh Glass, Mike Fink, and Etienne Provost, the wanderings of Jedediah S. Smith, the battle of Pierre's Hole, and innumerable other romantic incidents have made famous the career of this notable company. Some idea of the perils incurred in their numberless adventures may be judged from the loss of life among their employes. From 1822 to 1829 inclusive these losses amounted to seventy men, none of whom died natural deaths. The number who lost their lives in the later career of the company would certainly bring the total up to one hundred. The losses of property amounted probably to one hundred thousand dollars.

The cause of geographical knowledge owes a great deal to this company. The whole country around the sources of the Platte, Green, Yellowstone and Snake rivers and in the region around Great Salt Lake was opened up by them. Their adventurers gave names to the Sweetwater river, Independence Rock, Jackson Hole, and the tributaries of Green river and Great Salt Lake. They discovered this lake and also South Pass. They were the first to descend Green river by boat, and likewise the first, after Colter, to enter the Yellowstone Wonderland. They were the first to travel from Great Salt Lake southwesterly to southern California, the first to cross the Sierras and the deserts of Utah and Nevada between California and Great Salt Lake, and the first, so far as is known, to travel by land up the Pacific coast from San Francisco to the Columbia. They were indefatigable explorers and considering the fact that most of them made no records of what they did, the impress which they have left upon the geography of the west is surprisingly great.[15]

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[15] This is a fitting place to pay a deserved tribute to Albert Gallatin for a work in the cause of geographical knowledge which seems to have attracted very little attention, in spite of the fact that it accompanies that writer's celebrated *Synopsis of the Indian Tribes of North America,* which forms the basis of all later work upon the ethnography and philology of the American Indians. In this work Gallatin discusses the geography of the Far West with the new light which he had obtained from Gen. Ashley and Jedediah S. Smith. Ashley sent him a "manuscript map accompanied with numerous explanatory notes," and he also secured a statement from Smith as to the latter's observations. The result of this information, which Gallatin embodied in a map prepared and drawn by himself, was to settle many, and in fact nearly all, the important unknown and disputed questions in regard to the geography of the western portion of what is now United States territory. Among the points especially noted were the following: That the sources of the Rio Grande del Norte were not above 39 degrees north latitude; that the sources of the Colorado of the West were as far north as 43 degrees; that Lake Timpanago, or Great Salt Lake, had no outlet to the Pacific ocean and no tributary on its west shore, but two important ones from the east; that there was another salt lake without an outlet about 80 miles south of the southernmost point of Great Salt Lake; that the course of the far-famed Buenaventura river, which was long supposed to drain some great central lake, was confined to the Pacific coast, and, far from being east and west, was in reality from north to south; that the Multanomah, or Willamette river, long supposed to rise near Great Salt Lake, was also a Pacific coast stream only; that the Owyhee river took its rise west of and at no great distance from the Great Salt Lake; and finally that the whole country between Great Salt Lake and the Sierra Nevada mountains was of sandy, desert character with only a few wild Indians, "the most miserable objects in creation."

When it is considered that this information was given to the world in 1836, a year before Captain Bonneville's map, which claims credit

But perhaps the most important service which the company rendered its country was as a school for the education of those who were later to assist the government in the exploration of the West. It was to the old members and employes of the Rocky Mountain Fur Company that the government looked mainly for its guides when it entered those regions for the first time. It owes them a debt which the salaries paid for their services very inadequately measure.

for nearly all of it, was published, one may easily judge of its importance in the evolution of our Western geography. We shall further treat of this matter in our sketch of Captain Bonneville's work.

For a *résumé* of existing knowledge concerning the discovery of Great Salt Lake see Part V., Chapter IV.

CHAPTER XIX.

THE AMERICAN FUR COMPANY.

ESTABLISHMENT OF THE WESTERN DEPARTMENT.

Astor purchases interest in Mackinaw Company — Foreigners excluded from the United States fur trade — Astor buys out Northwest interests in United States — The Mackinaw letter books — Farnham's outfit confiscated — Suit against Colonel Chambers — Opposition of St. Louis traders — Russell Farnham — Negotiations with St. Louis parties — Western Department established at St. Louis.

THE American Fur Company was incorporated by Act of the Legislature of New York, April 6, 1808. Mr. Astor was the company and the incorporation was merely "a fiction intended to broaden and facilitate his operations." Hitherto Mr. Astor's relation to the trade had been rather that of a merchant, buying from the producers and shipping to various parts of the world for sale to the consumers. He now began to enter the trade on a broader scale, producing the furs by means of his own operations in the field. But in his efforts to establish himself in the region along the Great Lakes, then the richest fur country yet opened up within the limits of the United States, he encountered a formidable obstacle in the presence of the Mackinaw Company whose headquarters were at Michilimackinac, in the strait between Lakes Huron and Michigan. Although there were no longer British troops south of the boundary, the laws of the United States did not exclude British traders, and the Mackinaw Company had firmly established itself in all the country about the Great Lakes and the headwaters of the Mississippi. In order to neutralize to some extent the power of this company Mr. Astor found it necessary to purchase an interest in it. He was doubtless enabled to do this because the British traders understood that it was in line with the wishes of the American government, and they preferred to yield a share of their business to American traders rather than lose it all as they might do if Congress should exclude foreigners from the trade within the United States. Accordingly Mr. Astor and certain partners of the Northwest Company bought out the Mackinaw Company and organized a new association under Mr. Astor's charter and called it the Southwest Company.[1] The name was given in contradistinction to the British Company which did business in the country to the north and west. Under this arrangement Mr. Astor held a two-thirds interest in the trade within the United States with the understanding that it was all to fall into his hands at the expiration of five years. Scarcely had the new arrangement gone into effect when its operations were suspended by the War of 1812.

Another comprehensive enterprise which Mr. Astor organized under his general charter was the Pacific Fur Company whose career has already been sketched in these pages. This enterprise also was ruined by the war and Mr. Astor found himself in 1815 scarcely a whit advanced in his schemes over three years before. He now began to gather up the scattered fragments of his business on the lakes. The better to advance his interests in this quarter he urged, and was largely instrumental in, the passage of an Act by Congress excluding foreigners from participating in the fur trade of the United States except in subordinate capacities under American traders. After the passage of this Act, April 29, 1816, it became necessary for the Northwest Company to relinquish their interests on American territory. Mr. Astor stood ready to accommodate them in this regard and it has often been said that he seized the opportunity to recoup himself for the losses forced upon him by that company on the Pacific in 1813. Be that as it may the American Fur Company succeeded to the interests of the Northwest and Southwest Companies in 1816 and in the following year the new organization went into effect.[2]

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[1] The names of the Mackinaw traders seem to have been Cameron, Fraser, Dickson, and Rolette, the last two becoming prominent at a later date in the American Fur Company. Astor gave them a one-third interest in the new Southwest Company.

The field of operations which had its base at Mackinaw and embraced the region of the Great Lakes and the upper Mississippi, and, what is not generally known, a considerable tract of territory on the east shore of Lake Huron, is not within the scope of this work. It is referred to here only to show the course of events connecting the operations of the Pacific Fur Company with those of the Western Department of the American Fur Company with headquarters at St. Louis. But as nearly ten years elapsed from the downfall of Astoria to the final establishment of Mr. Astor's business at St. Louis, a brief outline of intervening events is essential to a proper exposition of the subject. Luckily the necessary data for such an outline are still extant in the form of two ponderous letter books of the American Fur Company which the visitor at Mackinaw Island may now see in the John Jacob Astor Hotel.[3] The letters are almost entirely those of Ramsay Crooks and Robert Stuart, the larger part having been written by Crooks. The books seem to have accompanied Crooks in his travels between New York, Michilimackinac and St. Louis, as the many different handwritings of copyists and the varieties of ink used sufficiently attest. The first letter is dated September 18, 1816, and the last July 29, 1825; but the period most thoroughly covered embraces only the years 1817-23, including, however, the entire period from the dissolution of the Southwest Company to the establishment of the Western Department of the

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[2] Crooks, in a letter dated in May or June, 1817, says: "The business of the Southwest Company, heretofore conducted by Mr. Pierre D. Rocheblave, is now managed by myself, and in consequence a transfer has been made of all the property of that concern."

[3] For an opportunity to examine these books the author is indebted to their owner, Mr. Claude Cable, proprietor of the John Jacob Astor Hotel.

American Fur Company in St. Louis. The course of events which led to the final opening up of the Missouri branch of the trade will be told as far as possible in the language of these letters.

In the new arrangement the old Pacific Fur Company partners and clerks came again prominently to the front. Ramsay Crooks became the general agent of the company associated with Robert Stuart on apparently equal terms. Russell Farnham became the company's chief representative on the Mississippi. W. W. Mathews was their agent in Montreal for the hiring of employes. Franchère was offered a berth but was forced to defer acceptance for a time pending the fulfillment of a prior engagement with the Northwest Company. Of the new men who bore an important part in the operations of the new company, the most prominent were the Abbott brothers, James and Samuel, of Detroit. Both were able men and both rendered the company excellent service.

Crooks, Stuart, and Farnham joined in the campaign of 1817. Crooks himself spent most of the summer on Mackinaw Island organizing the business. No incident of special importance occurred during this year except in the case of Farnham, who had been selected to manage the business on the Mississippi. The long standing jealousy of the St. Louis traders toward Mr. Astor's company had been communicated in some degree to the government officials stationed in St. Louis charged with the conduct of Indian affairs. While the Act of 1816 excluded British traders, it did not prevent the engagement of foreigners in the service of American traders. The American Fur Company very largely recruited its force from Montreal and Farnham's Mississippi company was composed mainly of Canadians. The authorities near St. Louis seized upon this fact as a violation of the law. The measures which they took to enforce the law as they interpreted it are thus described by Crooks in a letter to Governor Cass, dated New York, April 15, 1818: "Colonel Talbot Chambers of the Rifle Regiment, having last summer thought proper to deny the power of the Agent of Indian Affairs, acting under your immediate orders, to grant foreigners permission to accompany American traders to the Mississippi, for the purpose of aiding those citizens in their commerce with the Indians on that stream; and refusing to recognize any other authority to trade in that country than the licenses emanating from the Governors of the Missouri and Illinois territories, he seized and sent down to St. Louis, in charge of Lieutenant Blair and a Sergeant's guard, two boats belonging to the American Fur Company, which were under the command of Russell Farnham and Daniel Darling, both natural born citizens of the United States." The American Fur Company was not accustomed to permit infringements of its rights by any government official, no matter how high. Suit was promptly brought against Colonel Chambers, and after litigation running through four years, was decided in favor of the company.[4] Colonel Thomas H. Benton was counsel for the American Fur Company in this case. Crooks said in the letter quoted in the accompanying footnote that the verdict was especially gratifying to him, not on account of the award, but because it exposed the unreasonable persecution to which the company had been subjected by the St. Louis parties.

The extent to which this persecution was carried may be inferred from the following remarks contained in a letter from Crooks to Nicholas Bolevin at Prairie du Chien dated at Michilimackinac August 9, 1818: "A species of civil war has already been too long waged by the St. Louis interests against those of the Lakes. Our rights to the Indian trade are precisely the same, and surely the men of Mackinaw are entitled to equal protection and advantage with those of the Illinois country. . . . We ask nothing for ourselves, from either the civil or military authorities of the country, which we would for a moment wish to be withheld from the others. We are fully entitled to equal privileges with our opponents, and we can never consent to have them abridged or in any manner impaired."

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[4] "The suit with Colonel Chambers for the seizure of Farnham's boats in 1817 was brought to a close at the end of last October, when we obtained a verdict for $5,000 damages. The Colonel's 'bar'l' being very good, we are likely to recover the amount awarded to us." Letter from Crooks to Stuart, February 8, 1823.

Still further in evidence of the same bitter feeling against the American Fur Company are the following instructions to Farnham when he was about to start on one of his expeditions to the Mississippi: "You must not listen to the thousand stories and perhaps threats you will hear, for such things will be attempted with a view to checking your activity and enterprise. . . . Be extremely cautious in giving vent to the hard things you may and will feel inclined to say of some people you will have to deal with in the course of your absence from this place; for, be assured, every word affecting these great men will be treasured up against you. And beware of others who will try to insinuate themselves into your confidence the better to betray you."

The American Fur Company meanwhile used its great influence at Washington to remove the legal difficulties of the situation and eventually succeeded. In a letter to Farnham written in New York March 17, 1819, Crooks stated that the War Department had at last cleared up the construction of the law in regard to the introduction of foreigners and the territorial extent of licenses and that the St. Louis officials had been directed to recognize the validity of the licenses of the Mackinaw traders. "You may ascend the Missouri with your Mackinaw men," he writes, "in perfect confidence. Governor Clark has the order about respecting your licenses and so has Colonel Chambers. I met with Mr. Benjamin O'Fallon in Washington. He is appointed agent for the Missouri, and is, I believe, convinced that all the reports so industriously circulated about Mr. Astor and his agents, which created such unheard-of prejudices against us, and did us so much injury with the officers, were invented and propagated by people who feared us, and labored to drive us by this means from the country. . . . On the whole we have now reason to believe that this reign of persecution is, if not at an end, at least very nearly so. . . . There is nothing to prevent your going into the Missouri now with your Canadians."[5]

[5] Farnham's first essays up the Missouri river were only as far as to the mouth of Grand river, where he left the Missouri to visit the Sac Indians. Nevertheless, to him belongs the credit of being the first trader in the employ of the American Fur Company to carry the business of that company into the valley of the Missouri.

Russell Farnham was a typical frontiersman of the better class. He first comes to our notice as a clerk in the Pacific Fur Company, and one of the Astorians who sailed in the *Tonquin*. He was a "Green Mountain Boy" of great energy, pluck, and perseverance. His career at Astoria was full of adventure. He was one of a party who pursued and captured a number of deserters in November, 1811. He was in the Indian fight at the Dalles of the Columbia when Reed's tin box was stolen. He helped build the post at Spokane and spent the winter of 1812-13 among the Flatheads. He was executioner of the Indian whom Clarke ordered hung for theft, June 1st, 1813. Upon the downfall of Astoria he sailed with Hunt on the *Pedler*; was landed at Kamchatka; made his way overland to Hamburg, and sailed thence to New York. Crooks, referring to Farnham's life on the Columbia, once said that "he underwent greater privations than any half dozen of us."

When the American Fur Company began to resume operations after the War of 1812, Farnham entered its service and bore the brunt of the battle during the company's struggle to establish itself on the Missouri. All that is known of him in this new field is given in the present chapter. He did good work and was respected alike by his employers and opponents.

Farnham continued in the service of the company until 1832, when he fell a victim to the cholera and died at St. Louis, October 30th of that year. Crooks thus refers to his death in a letter to Pierre Chouteau, Jr., written in New York November 16th, 1832: "Poor Farnham; he has paid the debt of nature after a life of uncommon activity and endless exposure. Peace to his manes! He was one of the best meaning, but the most sanguine men I almost ever met with. During all the ravages of the pestilence here, and the unexpected rapidity with which some of my friends were hurried to their long account, I never felt anything like the sensation I experienced upon hearing of my honest friend's death, for I did not know he was at St. Louis, and thought him safe in some part of the wilderness."

It is not to be inferred that during all these years, while Crooks was pushing his operations in the field farther and farther to the westward, Mr. Astor made no attempt to establish a branch house in St. Louis nor others to interest him there. The firm of Berthold, Chouteau and Company had more than once considered the question of purchasing an interest in Mr. Astor's business, but had never come to any definite arrangement. Crooks became tired of dallying in the matter and thus expressed his feeling to Mr. Astor, at that time in Europe, under date of July 27, 1820: "To address Messrs. Berthold and Chouteau on a subject so often canvassed, appears to me more than useless, as their conduct has hitherto betrayed such indecision that small hopes ought to be entertained of their determination now. Perhaps the appearance of David Stone and Company at St. Louis may rouse them from their fancied security and turn their attention seriously this way. Lest that should be the case, and to clear myself from all blame, I shall in a few days write them and request an immediate and specific reply at New York."

The new firm of Stone and Company, to which allusion is here made, was having a career of such rapid prosperity as to alarm the St. Louis traders and even to excite the apprehensions of the American Fur Company itself. What became of its efforts will presently appear, but it will first be of interest to present Mr. Crooks' letter to Berthold and Chouteau which he promised but a moment ago. It is a model in its way and displays to advantage the confidence of the American Fur Company in the ultimate success of its undertaking. After reciting that he had been informed of a recent proposition by Mr. Berthold to Mr. Astor's son to purchase an interest in the American Fur Company, and stating the conditions under which Mr. Astor would be willing to sell, he urged an immediate reply with explicit powers in order that he might convey it to Mr. Astor on his intended visit to that gentleman in Paris. He concluded his letter as follows: "You might perhaps expect me to give an opinion of what the business will hereafter be, but

I neither advise you to join nor dissuade you from the undertaking. You know enough to enable you to decide on what you ought to do, and I can not consent to be blamed should my anticipations and the result prove at variance. For myself and the gentlemen here I am permitted to say, we will with pleasure pursue the same path with you, but if you will not be of our party, we are determined on traveling, as heretofore, by ourselves."[6]

To this curt ultimatum Berthold and Chouteau did not see fit to accede, and the year's trade went on as before. In the following winter, 1820-21, Crooks went to Europe and entered into arrangements with Astor for the next four years. In the meanwhile, the field of the Missouri grew more tempting than ever, and it became the settled policy of Crooks and Stuart to enter it at the earliest possible moment. In a letter to Mr. Astor, who was still in Europe, dated Michilimackinac, July 29, 1821, Crooks says: "I still intend going to St. Louis with a branch of our concern, and will draw from the outfit usually made from this place those of the Illinois, the lower Mississippi and the Wabash country. The balance of the business can be transacted here advantageously." In pursuance of this policy he wrote to

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[6] As further illustrating the confidence of the American Fur Company agents, the following incident may be cited. In the winter of 1818-19 the firm of Cabanne and Company of which Manuel Lisa seems to have been either a partner or principal agent, was dissolved, and both Lisa and one Dennis Julien applied to Mr. Crooks for an outfit of goods, apparently with the intention of embarking in independent enterprises. Although it is not to be supposed that the American Fur Company was unable to comply with these requests, or that it would have been unwilling in ordinary circumstances to do so, Crooks now viewed the matter in a different light. He was willing to forego the advantages of this temporary trade rather than place himself under further obligations to the St. Louis traders, or do anything which might interfere with him when the proper opportunity arrived to seize upon the Missouri trade. He therefore replied adroitly that "it is now too late to procure an additional supply from abroad. Nothing proper for your purpose can be procured here, with the exceptions of some articles of minor importance, and it will consequently be out of my power to meet your wishes."

Samuel Abbott, who was managing the company's business at Prairie du Chien on the Mississippi, under date of October 25, 1821: "Unless it is absolutely necessary for you to remain at Prairie du Chien it is our wish that you proceed this fall to St. Louis, there to remain until you obtain a *complete* list of the goods usually found in the retail establishments at that place. Ascertain everything that may be of advantage to us, and, as soon thereafter as may be convenient to yourself, pursue your journey to New York. . . . The state of the fur trade generally, and that of the Missouri particularly, will be very desirable, more especially when coupled with the resources of the individuals who are engaged in the business, as also their standing with the world."

On the 30th of November, 1821, Crooks thus wrote to Mr. Astor: "Preliminary arrangements are made for prosecuting the trade of St. Louis and the Missouri next season. Berthold and Chouteau, with all their advantages, have suffered the firm of Stone & Co. to get the better of them more effectually than could have been believed, and as there is no injunction to the contrary, we may as well come in for a share of the business. . . . You now do no business with them worth attending to,[7] and any scruples we have heretofore entertained in regard to embarking in their portion of the trade, ought not to be indulged in any longer. Besides, their apathy or bad management in opposing Stone begins to enlarge *his* views, and has already tempted him to commence a competition with our outposts on the lower Mississippi; so that, independent of other considerations, self defense will lead us into the field against him. I shall not, however, for the first year attempt much. My intention is merely to supply our lower Mississippi and Illinois river outfits from St. Louis, and tamper with the Missouri traders on a moderate scale, in order to secure them for the following year. . . . Without being very sanguine, I feel so favorably toward the undertaking as to make me enter it with great confidence of success."

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[7] This refers to Mr. Astor's relations with certain traders in St. Louis which had in part deterred him from entering the field against them. It is greatly to the credit of Mr. Astor that he never stooped to the petty competition which was such a constant feature of the fur trade in those years. He stood on higher ground in those matters than his agents ever did, possibly because he was more removed from the field of actual operations. He was supplying with goods certain St. Louis firms whose trade lay up the Missouri, and he therefore scrupulously avoided entering the same field of operations with them. Thus, in a letter to Farnham dated December 28, 1818, Crooks expresses regret that Farnham had entered the country of the Sac Indians by the route of the Missouri and Grand rivers, instead of by the Mississippi and the Des Moines; "for," said he, "although no agreement exists between us and Messrs. Cabanne & Company, to prevent our going into that river or they into the Mississippi, still, as Mr. Astor supplies their goods, they partly calculated on our not opposing them."

On the 2nd of July, 1821, the British Parliament passed an act which virtually excluded American traders from Canadian territory. The American Fur Company accordingly withdrew its outposts from the region to the east of Lake Huron, but promptly made a counter move along the frontier from Lake Superior to the Lake of the Woods by establishing three posts there in competition with the Hudson Bay Company.

In the winter of 1821-22 the American Fur Company made a very important move in securing the abolition by Congress of the United States factories for trading with the Indians. This achievement, which has been fully considered in another place, removed government competition in the trade, and left the company with a free hand to fight its battles with the private traders.

In the spring of 1822 Crooks prepared to put his ideas into effect by opening up an establishment at St. Louis. He wrote to Astor, April 23, 1822: "I regret beyond measure that our fastidiousness about interfering with our St. Louis friends induced us to postpone until the present time any attempt to participate in the Missouri trade." And later in the same letter he adds: "Mr. Samuel Abbott goes to St. Louis to remain in charge of our concerns there." In a letter from Crooks to Stuart of April 10, 1822, occurs the first mention that has fallen under our observation of the use of the name *Western Department* as applied to the St. Louis interests of the American Fur Company.

It was therefore in the year 1822 (not 1819, as has been generally given by historians) that the American Fur Company established its Western Department at St. Louis, and gave to its previous field of operations the name of the Northern Department. Samuel Abbott was the first person in charge of the new business at St. Louis, while Robert Stuart remained at Michilimackinac. The Western Department was confined to the Missouri and the lower posts on the Mississippi and the Illinois. With the Northern Department, which embraced the region of the Great Lakes and the upper Mississippi, we shall have nothing to do farther except as it may incidentally fall in our way.

CHAPTER XX.

THE AMERICAN FUR COMPANY.

THE UPPER MISSOURI OUTFIT.

Consolidation with Stone, Bostwick and Company — Arrangement with the St. Louis traders — Sketch of the Columbia Fur Company — Rivalry with the American Fur Company — Union with American Fur Company — Importance of this union — Movement toward the upper river — Establishment of Fort Union — Commencement of the mountain trade — Henry Vanderburgh — Attempt to open a trade with the Blackfeet — The mission of Berger — Blackfeet visit Fort Union — A trader sent to the Blackfeet — Treaty of peace between the Blackfeet and the Assiniboines — Establishment of Fort Piegan — Successful trade at this post — Mitchell builds Fort McKenzie — Tulloch builds Fort Cass on the Yellowstone — Upper country all occupied by end of 1832 — Business changes — Proposition to introduce steamboats in the trade — The *Yellowstone* built — Voyages of 1831 and 1832 — Their importance in the history of the Missouri — Impression upon the Indians — British influence on the Upper Missouri — History of the Astor medals.

THE American Fur Company was thus finally established at St. Louis in spite of the opposition of the St. Louis traders. It was there without connection or dependence upon any of them. But it would still require a great deal of adroit management and much hard work before its hold on the Missouri trade could be made secure. There was the solid opposition of the local traders to contend with, and there had lately arisen the formidable concern of David Stone and Company, or, as it was also called, Stone, Bostwick and Company. Finally a Boston company, whose name is omitted from the correspondence, had recently entered the field with a great show of strength. So many houses could not all prosper on the amount of business at that time in sight, and it was clear that there must be a combination of interests by which some of the companies would survive and others be forced from the field.

The first step toward a consolidation is announced in a letter from Crooks to Stuart dated New York, February 8, 1823. It says, among other things, that "Messrs. Stone, Bostwick and Company have been admitted into the American Fur Company to commence the 1st of April next and continue three and one-half years, which is six months longer than our agreement with Mr. Astor.[1] . . For the present, you will take charge of the Detroit Department, and Mr. Bostwick will manage at St. Louis, where I will assist him next summer." Abbott was also to operate with Bostwick in St. Louis. This was welcome news to Stuart, who wrote to David Stone, May 19, 1823: "Permit me to welcome you as a member of the American Fur Company. I think you have all acted wisely; but if the junction had been formed five years ago, there would have been cause for mutual congratulation."

The arrangement with Stone, Bostwick and Company ran through the agreed three and one-half years, and was not renewed, but instead the management of the affairs of the Western Department was placed in the hands of Bernard Pratte and Company under an agreement which was to continue in force for a period of four years.[2] Thus, at the very period when General Ashley's remarkable achievements were turning the heads of the St. Louis traders, the American Fur Company formed its first alliance with any of the old St. Louis houses. Bernard Pratte and Company included some of the strongest of the traders, among them one or more of the Chouteaus. It is only to be regretted that this inevitable consummation did not take place in 1809 instead of 1827.

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[1] Crooks and Stuart's arrangements thus continued until the spring of 1826, while the agreement with Stone, Bostwick and Company ran until the fall of that year.

With the letter next below the Mackinaw record closes and the next data upon the subject are found in the Chouteau papers of St. Louis.

[2] "Nous sommes fondés sur ½ dans les profits ôu perts des opérations de traite pour le Mississippi depuis le Prairie du Chien et de tout le Missouri et de ses dépendences." Bernard Pratte and Company to J. P. Cabanne, January 9, 1827.

Scarcely had the American Fur Company closed this important arrangement when it was compelled to give its attention to a powerful opposition which had grown up in the field of its operations. This was the Columbia Fur Company, an organization only five years old, which had extended its trade through the entire region of the headwaters of the Mississippi as far east as the Great Lakes and as far west as the Missouri. The history of this company is somewhat obscure, but the more important facts are known. Its founder was Joseph Renville, an old British trader who later served as an officer during the War of 1812. After the war he retired on the half pay of a captain of the line, and resumed his former occupation. Wishing to return to his post on the Red River of the North within the territory of the United States, but not being permitted to retain his pay if he left British territory, he gave up his pension and went back to his post. When the amalgamation of the Northwest and Hudson Bay Companies took place in 1821, and threw out of service many of the former employes of these companies, Renville invited several of the most experienced to join him in a new company. The names of those who accepted this proposal were Kenneth McKenzie and William Laidlaw. The ablest of these associates was Kenneth McKenzie, who in a few years rose to the presidency of the new company. As the laws of the United States forbade foreigners to engage in the fur trade within its boundaries on their own account, the organization was legalized by bringing in certain citizens of the United States, among them Daniel Lamont, and placing it under their name. The legal title of the firm was Tilton and Company, but the name by which it was always known was the Columbia Fur Company. Whether this name was given in token of the ambitious schemes of the new company and their purpose to carry their trade to the Pacific, does not appear.

The capital of the Columbia Fur Company was not large, but the partners were all bold, experienced, and enterprising men. They rapidly extended their trade over a wide tract of country. Their principal establishment was at Lake Traverse, almost exactly on the divide between two important rivers — the St. Peter's, a large tributary of the Mississippi, and the Red River of the North. Another post was at Prairie du Chien on the Mississippi, and a third as far east as Green Bay on the western shore of Lake Michigan. The most important outposts, however, were on the Missouri river. In 1823[3] James Kipp and a Mr. Tilton, doubtless of the firm of Tilton and Company, visited the Mandans, and then built a post on the south side of the Missouri above the site where Fort Clark was built. Tilton was the first trader in charge. He and Kipp had a hard time of it at the new post, for the Aricaras, immediately after Colonel Leavenworth's attack on their villages, had moved up the river and had settled down opposite the Mandans. Far from being humbled by their experiences at the hands of Colonel Leavenworth, they were more vicious and troublesome than ever, and practically held the new post in a state of siege. Tilton and Kipp were forced to abandon it before winter set it. They built a house in the Mandan village, where they conducted their trade until 1827. The necessary supplies were brought in part from Fort Traverse, and in part by keelboat from St. Louis.

The most important of this company's posts on the Missouri was just above the mouth of the Teton river, or the Little Missouri, as it was then called. It bore the name of Fort Tecumseh. The American Fur Company also had a post here, but what the name was is not known. Still farther down was Fort Lookout, and close by it the American Fur Company post, Kiowa. Below this were posts at the mouth of the Niobrara, James, and Vermilion rivers, while the lowest establishment on the river was at Council Bluffs. The American Fur Company likewise had posts all along this stretch of river, but none so high as the Mandans. By the close of the year 1826, when Bernard Pratte and Company assumed the agency of the Western Department, the American and Columbia Fur Companies were in active competition with each other through the Sioux and Omaha country. Both companies outfitted in St. Louis, and throughout the field did business along the same lines. The Columbia Fur Company had grown too strong and possessed too much ability to be put down by competition, and it became necessary for the American Fur Company to do something else to rid itself of an opposition which, according to Crooks, did their "business in those countries an annual injury of ten thousand dollars at least."

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[3] This would seem to be the correct date. Maximilian says it was in 1822, but adds that it was in the year of the Leavenworth campaign against the Aricaras, which was in 1823. Others of Maximilian's dates in this connection are back one year.

Proposals were therefore made for a union of the two companies and negotiations to this end were completed about July, 1827.[4] The terms of the new arrangement were advantageous to all concerned, and were an important step on the part of the American Fur Company toward adjusting its business to the new situation upon which it had entered. The Columbia Fur Company withdrew altogether from the region of the Great Lakes and the upper Mississippi, which thus reverted to the Northern Department without opposition. On the Missouri a sub-department was created including all the valley above the mouth of the Big Sioux, and the Columbia Fur Company took charge of this department almost without change of organization. The partners of the retiring company became partners or proprietors of this sub-department, and McKenzie, Laidlaw, and Lamont conducted the affairs of the upper Missouri quite as independently as if they had remained a separate company.

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[4] Chouteau to Russell Farnham, July 11, 1827: "I have at last concluded the arrangement [of consolidation] with the Columbia Fur Company."

Numerous other references to this event are found in the correspondence of the summer of 1827.

Mr. Crooks in his instructions to P. D. Papin, whom he sent up the river to appraise with Mr. McKenzie the property of the Columbia Fur Company, gave him the following directions: "You will deliver to Mr. McKenzie or his agent the whole of our property at the different posts, with all the books and papers appertaining thereto, and you will direct our people to obey him in all things as they would Bernard Pratte and Company. You will give him all the information you can relative to the property, the condition of our business, the nature and state of the accounts, and the character of our people individually." The arrangement with the American Fur Company was therefore more in the nature of a union than an amalgamation. The name Columbia Fur Company was dropped and in its place arose the unpretentious business style of "Upper Missouri Outfit," or in brief, "U. M. O." In all the trade arrangements for the next twenty years or more this name and division of the river were preserved.[5]

The transfer of property resulting from the union of the two companies was completed by the end of the year 1827. The inventories were turned over at Prairie du Chien October 10; at Council Bluffs October 1; and at Fort Tecumseh December 5. The valuation of the Columbia Fur Company property at the various posts on the Missouri was a little over seventeen thousand dollars. The entire transaction was thus completed and the new arrangement went into full effect with the beginning of the year 1828.

This event was the most important in the history of the Western Department of the American Fur Company for it made that department by far the most powerful trading concern on the river. Thereafter the "company" always meant, among the fur traders of the West, the American Fur Company, and all others were mere "opposition" companies. This supremacy it maintained until it went out of business altogether over thirty years afterward.

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[5] It is an interesting fact that this division of the valley of the Missouri has characterized the history of the river in one respect or another to the present day. In the government control and improvement of the river there are now two districts whose dividing line is at Sioux City, Iowa.

At the time of the transfer of the Columbia Fur Company, General Ashley had just received the third of his phenomenal collections of beaver skins from beyond the mountains. His successes made a profound impression at St. Louis, and it was the ambition of the American Fur Company to invade those regions from which wealth was being so easily extracted. It was Kenneth McKenzie's desire to enter the mountain business at once and he laid before the management in St. Louis a carefully concerted plan of operations for the season of 1828. But less sanguine councils prevailed. Ashley's performance was regarded as too extraordinary to be capable of general imitation, and the company thought it better to go a little slow and first establish a permanent post at the mouth of the Yellowstone, which would afford a safe and convenient base for the operations of the upper country. McKenzie was selected for this purpose, after Pierre Chouteau, with great gentleness and consideration, had dissuaded him from his cherished mountain enterprise.

In the summer of 1828 accordingly a definite advance toward the sources of the Missouri river was commenced. The first step naturally was to occupy that important situation at the mouth of the Yellowstone to which natural routes of travel converged from all parts of the territory beyond. Here evidently would be the central and principal depot for all the trade of the upper country. It is more than possible that it was this "union at some convenient point above," referred to by McKenzie in discussing the trade situation, which led him to give the name Union to the establishment finally built there. It was about September 15th that he dispatched the keelboat *Otter* from the Mandans to the mouth of the Yellowstone to establish a post for the Assiniboine trade. The boat arrived "in sufficient time to build a fort and have all necessary preparations made for security."[6] Who it was that McKenzie sent to do this work is not stated in the correspondence, but it was very likely James Kipp. The date of the beginning of the work was within two weeks of October 1, 1828. This post, the first that the American Fur Company built above the Mandans, was not named Union, as is generally supposed, but Fort Floyd.[7] "Fort Union" was first applied to a post built in the year 1829, about two hundred miles above the mouth of the Yellowstone. The correspondence of the American Fur Company is clear upon this point. But before the close of 1830 the name "Floyd" had been abandoned and "Union" had been permanently settled upon the post at or near the Yellowstone.

While McKenzie was establishing himself upon the upper Missouri, he was keeping his eye upon the rich fields where General Ashley had won his wealth and fame. He took early measures to open up a business in the mountains even if he could not personally attend to it. In the fall of 1828 he sent Etienne Provost to look up the trappers of the Rocky Mountain Fur Company with a view to bringing them in to Fort Floyd. This was no doubt congenial work to Provost, who, as we have seen, had fallen out with Ashley and his associates in the summer of 1826. In the fall of 1828 old Hugh Glass came to Fort Floyd and said that he had been deputed by the free trappers to invite McKenzie to bring goods to a rendezvous designated by them for trade after the spring hunt of 1829. To meet these hunters a party was organized under Henry Vanderburgh, and left St. Louis in April, 1829, with thirty men, twenty-five horses and fifty traps. Not much is known for the next two years of the doings of this intrepid leader except that he plunged at once into the heart of the mountains and was as bold and enterprising as were any of his rivals in the mountain company.

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[6] McKenzie to Chouteau, Fort Tecumseh, December 26, 1828.

[7] See "Fort Union" in list of trading posts, Appendix F.

One scrap of information shows that he made the acquaintance of the Blackfeet at an early day. In the summer of 1830 he had a hard battle with them in which he was victorious though at the loss of one of his party. He killed a large number of the Indians. It was only two years later that he paid for this victory with his own life.

This was the beginning of the American Fur Company's participation in the fur trade of the Rocky mountains. It dates from the year after the termination of Bernard Pratte and Company's arrangement with General Ashley. It did not prove to be an advantageous branch of the trade, but rather a source of infinite annoyance in the fierce competition which it engendered.[8]

The contract between the American Fur Company and Bernard Pratte and Company by which the latter assumed control of the Western Department was to continue in force for four years. It expired with the outfit for 1829. In like manner the contract between the latter company and Mc-

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[8] The following extracts from letters from Pierre Chouteau, Jr., to Kenneth McKenzie will be of interest in this connection. Septemter 28, 1827: "I have the satisfaction to inform you that our mountain expedition in connection with General Ashley has been successful in its trade by closing at once the outfit and fortunate by having reached the settlements in safety with the whole returns; which terminates our arrangements with the General. It therefore becomes necessary to learn from you with the least possible loss of time what is to be done to prosecute the business in the Rocky mountains, which is intended to be carried on through the medium of your Upper Missouri Outfit."

April 25, 1828: "I have no objection to your going with the first expedition, because I consider it very important, not only on account of the hunt, but even more for the purpose of opening relations with the hunting parties, whether of Ashley, or Pilcher, or whatever trader. For three years these enterprises have succeeded well with General Ashley, but with him alone. Many others, and even he before this time, have met with great disasters. I believe that there is a great deal to gain if such an expedition succeeds, but there is also great risk to run. One of the principal dangers is loss of horses at the hands of the Indians. It is necessary to be prudent, firm, and especially to exact obedience from the engagés, who are generally very insubordinate. The least negligence in the care of the horses may entail the ruin of the party." Other considerations prevailed, as we have seen, and McKenzie did not go to the mountains.

Kenzie, Laidlaw and Lamont, as agents of the Upper Missouri Outfit, expired with the equipment for the year 1830. Both of these contracts were renewed — the first on the 22nd of March, 1830, and the second in August of that year. The renewals in both cases were for four years. The firm of Bernard Pratte and Company included Bernard Pratte, Pierre Chouteau, Jr., John P. Cabanne, and B. Berthold. The terms of the new agreement were practically the same as the old. The arrangement between the Western Department and the Upper Missouri Outfit was also the same as before, except that McKenzie was given a higher salary.[9]

McKenzie entered upon the second period of his work on the upper Missouri with all the energy of a strong nature and a full realization of his magnificent opportunities. Being now secure in his position at the mouth of the Yellowstone, and having made a definite beginning in the mountain trade, he turned his attention toward the occupation of more advanced territory. Hitherto the country of the Blackfeet had not been successfully occupied by any company. The Missouri Fur Company was twice driven out with great loss while Ashley and Henry in 1822 and 1823 met with a similar experience. Even as late as 1830 no intercourse of any kind had been opened up with these Indians and they had no means of knowing the views of American traders. They were under the influence of British traders, so far as they were under any influence from without, and this was hostile to the Americans. The prospect of gaining a foothold in their country was therefore anything but reassuring. But as the tributaries of the upper Missouri were known to be rich in beaver it was scarcely to be expected that a man of

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[9] It seems that McKenzie was paid a salary besides his share in the business. The renewal of the contract above referred to is mentioned in a letter from Chouteau to W. B. Astor, August 23, 1830, in which Mr. Chouteau says: "The company has renewed the contract with McKenzie, Laidlaw, and Lamont for four years more, upon existing conditions, except that the equipment of the U. M. O. is to pay $2,000 annually to Mr. McKenzie instead of $1,500, as heretofore."

McKenzie's ambitious temperament would fail to find some means of drawing their wealth in his own direction.

It happened that the desired opportunity of opening communication with the Blackfeet came about in quite an unexpected way. McKenzie, who had been down the river in the summer of 1830, returned to Fort Union in the fall. He found there an old trapper by the name of Berger, who had long served with the Hudson Bay Company at their post nearest the Blackfoot country. Berger understood the Blackfoot language perfectly, was well acquainted with the tribal characteristics, and knew many of the Indians individually. How he happened to come to Fort Union and enter the service of the American Fur Company is not known, but there he was, and a more useful individual to McKenzie's purpose he could not have found in the entire West. McKenzie promptly approached him with a proposal that he should visit the Blackfeet and open negotiations with them. It was a dangerous mission, and was considered almost a forlorn hope by the people at Fort Union, but Berger consented to try it.[10]

Berger set out from Fort Union in the fall and traveled some four weeks before he saw any Indians. The party carried a flag unfurled so that the Indians might know at a distance that they were white men. They finally found a large village on the Marias river, some distance above the mouth. At the sight of it the little party were so terror-stricken that they wanted to turn back, but Berger persisted in the purpose of his mission, and the men followed his lead, scarcely expecting to be alive for another hour. When they were discovered, a number of mounted Indians started for them at full speed. Berger halted his party and himself advanced with his flag. The Indians paused and Berger called out his name. They recognized it, there was a rush to shake hands, and then the little party were welcomed to the village, where, to their great joy, they were received in the most hospitable manner. How long they remained is not known, but Berger finally succeeded in inducing a party of about forty, including several chiefs, to accompany him to Fort Union. The route was a long one, and on the way the Indians began to complain of the distance. Berger was put to his wit's end to prevent their turning back. Finally, when within a day's march from the post, tradition says, the Indians concluded to stop. Berger besought them to go on one day more and told them that if they did not reach the fort in that time he would give them his scalp and all his horses. This guaranty of good faith induced them to keep on, and sure enough, about 3 P. M. the next day they passed over a river bluff and beheld in the valley below the fort, just as Berger had told them. It was a great feat that Berger had accomplished, and McKenzie was highly gratified at its successful outcome.

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[10] There are several accounts of this expedition, notably those given by Charles Larpenteur in *Forty Years a Fur Trader*, pp. 111-116; and by James Stuart in contributions to Montana Historical Society, Vol. I., p. 84. These accounts differ widely in details, as all narratives based upon tradition are liable to. But the essential facts have recently come to light in the American Fur Company correspondence herewith presented, so that the account here given may be considered as being close to the facts as they occurred.

The party reached Fort Union before the end of the year 1831. McKenzie had a conference with the chiefs, and it goes without saying that that astute leader left no stone unturned to create a favorable impression. The Indians professed great satisfaction at the prospect of having a trading post near their village, and as an earnest of his purpose to establish one there during the following summer, McKenzie sent a trader and a few men to trade with them during the winter. He completed this stroke of good fortune during the following summer by bringing about a treaty of peace and friendship between the Blackfeet and the Assiniboines which promised protection to the trade throughout this region. The treaty was consummated on the 29th day of November, 1831.[11]

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[11] Following is McKenzie's account of Berger's successful visit, as condensed in a letter to Pierre Chouteau, Jr., dated at Fort Tecum-

In accordance with this promise to the Blackfeet McKenzie dispatched an expedition up the river in the fall of 1831. It consisted of twenty-five men under James Kipp, and left Fort Union on the 25th of August. The progress was very slow owing to low water, and the expedition did not pass the mouth of the Muscleshell until September 16th. In one place they only made eight miles in eleven days. They probably arrived at the mouth of the Marias and commenced their fort about the 15th of October.

The day before they reached their destination a trader of the Hudson Bay Company by the name of Fisher approached within a day's march and sent a message to the Piegans with a flattering offer if they would bring their trade to the British posts. He told them that the chiefs should all be

seh, January 7, 1831: "On my arrival at Fort Union last fall I fortunately found a Blackfoot interpreter, Berger, and by this means have been enabled to make those Indians acquainted with my views regarding them. I sent him with four or five men to their village, where they were kindly received and well treated. On their return to the fort they were accompanied by some of the principal chiefs. They expressed great satisfaction and pleasure at having a post at their village, which I promised and assured them that they should have this fall; and in order to strengthen my promise I have sent a clerk, with four or five men, to them to trade what they may have. It is impossible to say what may be the result of this enterprise, but I am very sanguine in my expectations."

The treaty of peace which McKenzie concluded with the Blackfeet in the summer of 1831, and which all narratives of these events mention, is a singular document. It is thus referred to in a letter from McKenzie to Chouteau, written at Fort Union December 11, 1831: "I have lately negotiated a treaty of peace between the Assiniboine and Blackfoot Indians, which I expect will be ratified. Exchange of tobacco has been made and all requisite ceremonies observed. If firm and durable it will be of great importance to this district."

Maximilian has preserved to us a copy of this treaty, which is worthy of reproduction for its original and grandiloquent phraseology: "We send greeting to all mankind! Be it known unto all nations that the most ancient, most illustrious, and most numerous tribes of the redskins, lords of the soil from the banks of the great waters unto the tops of the mountains, upon which the heavens rest, have entered into a solemn league and covenant to make, preserve and well dressed, all their wants supplied, and that they should be given better prices for their furs than the Americans, who were very poor, would give. Fortunately, McKenzie had a trader present among the Piegans at that time, the same whom he had sent among them some months before, and he proved quite as influential as "the smooth-tongued Englishman." The Piegans seemed from the start to be warmly attached to the Americans. It was a fortunate circumstance for they were the beaver hunters of their nation. They were at this time, says McKenzie, very jealous of their rights, and would not permit white men to set a trap in their country. This, however, far from being a disadvantage, was quite the reverse, for the company was spared all the trouble and loss attendant upon trapping expeditions.

The site selected by Kipp for the post was immediately in

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cherish a firm and lasting peace, that so long as the water runs, or the grass grows, they may hail each other as brethren, and smoke the calumet in friendship and security.

"On the vigil of St. Andrew in the year 1831, the powerful and distinguished nation of the Blackfeet, Piegan, and Blood Indians by their ambassadors appeared at Fort Union near the spot where the Yellowstone river unites its current with the Missouri, and in the council chamber of the Governor, Kenneth McKenzie, and the principal chief of the Assiniboine nation, the Man-that-Holds-the-Knife, attended by his chiefs of council, le Bechu, le Borgne, the Sparrow, the Bear's Arm, La Terre qui Tremble, and l'Enfant de Médecin, when, conforming to all ancient customs and ceremonies, and observing the due mystical signs enjoined by the great medicine lodges, a treaty of peace and friendship was entered into by the said high contracting parties, and is testified by their hands and seals hereunto annexed, hereafter and forever to live as brethren of one large, united, and happy family; and may the Great Spirit who watcheth over us all approve our conduct and teach us to love one another.

"Done, executed, ratified, and confirmed at Fort Union on the day and year first within written, in the presence of Jas. Archdale Hamilton."

The treaty is signed by a number of Assiniboine chiefs and by McKenzie on "behalf of the Piegans and Blackfeet." The ratification which McKenzie speaks of in his letter above doubtless refers to the Blackfeet, who were evidently absent, from the fact that McKenzie signed for them.

the angle between the Marias and the Missouri. When he arrived no Indians were present, but on the following day they appeared in great numbers. Kipp requested them to withdraw while he was constructing the post, telling them that if they would return in seventy-five days he would be ready to receive them. They agreed to do this. Promptly upon the expiration of the time fixed they appeared again and were astonished to find the fort all completed and ready for the trade.[12] During the first ten days after the post was built there were traded, according to McKenzie, two thousand four hundred beaver skins with the prospect of bringing the number up to four thousand before the winter was over.

The British, meanwhile, alarmed at the success of the Americans, are said to have instigated the Blood Indians to attempt the reduction of the post. The attack occurred in the winter time. Kipp had sufficient warning to lay in a stock of ice, for he had plenty of everything except water, and had no fear of a siege. The Indians beleaguered the post for some time, but finally withdrew. Kipp then turned his own weapons of war — the war of the traders — upon the Indians, and poured into them incessant charges of alcohol until the whole band was utterly vanquished and surrendered body and soul to the incomparable trader. Never had the English treated them so bountifully. They brought all their furs to the American post and before spring a fine lot had been collected.

In the spring of 1832 it became necessary for Kipp to take his furs to Fort Union. It was the strong desire of the Indians that the fort should be kept open during the summer, but Kipp's men refused to remain if he left. They accordingly abandoned the post and the Indians burned it soon after.[13]

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[12] This post was very appropriately named Fort Piegan.

[13] Some of the statements contained in this account of the founding of Fort Piegan were related by Kipp himself to Lieutenant J. H. Bradley, whose manuscript is now in the possession of the Montana His-

In the summer of 1832 David D. Mitchell was sent to take charge of affairs at the mouth of the Marias. Before he had reached the Muscleshell the keelboat *Flora*, carrying, it was said, thirty thousand dollars' worth of goods, was lost. It was swept from its moorings during the night by a storm, and was blown against a sand bar, where it sank. Two men were drowned. All the presents which McKenzie was sending to the Blackfeet were also lost. A large number of these Indians were accompanying the party, and were very angry, for they suspected that the destruction of the boat was by design. Mitchell came very near having serious trouble. He must have gone back to Union for a new outfit, but there is no record of his having done so.

When Mitchell arrived at Fort Piegan he found it burned down, and not liking the situation, he moved up the river six miles and selected a site on the left or north bank of the river in what is now known as Brulé bottom. The erection of the new post at this point was one of the thrilling episodes of the fur trade. There were several thousand Indians present, who had assembled from all quarters. The whites, during the building of the fort, lived on their keelboat. They worked like beavers, for the peril of the situation was apparent to all. Many of the Indians were actually hostile, and were ready for desperate measures. The entire party of whites could easily have been destroyed. But the men kept working away, while Mitchell maintained amicable relations. On one occasion it seemed as if trouble could not be avoided, but Mitchell's firmness and tact saved the party. As soon as the stockade was erected the men felt safe, and the Indians in large part withdrew soon after. This post was named Fort McKenzie, in honor of the able trader who ruled the country from Fort Union. Its successful completion assured a permanent foothold in the Blackfoot country, and it continued to be occupied until nearly the close of the period embraced in this work.

torical Society. Unfortunately Kipp was too intent upon warping the facts to his own glorification to give one that confidence in his statements that could be desired.

As soon as the success of the Blackfoot establishment was assured McKenzie turned his attention to the Crows. He already had itinerant traders among them, but the Indians wanted a post. In the same letter (December 11, 1831) in which he announced to the St. Louis management that Kipp had succeeded in his enterprise at the mouth of the Marias he said: "I intend to build a fort next summer on the Yellowstone at the mouth of the Bighorn for the Crows, and for many years some straggling white hunters will stay in the Crow country from whom we may expect a little beaver." This purpose was carried out the following year. Mr. Chouteau, who visited Union in June, 1832, on the steamboat *Yellowstone,* wrote to Mr. W. B. Astor on his return that McKenzie was, at the time of his visit at the fort, "preparing an outfit for the Yellowstone in order to establish a post at the mouth of the Bighorn for the trade of the Crows and the surrounding tribes, and to supply their mountain hunters." Samuel Tulloch was sent in charge of this work. The post was built in the fall of 1832, and was called Fort Cass.

By this time the field of the upper Missouri was as fully occupied as it ever came to be by the American Fur Company. There were three primary bases of operations — Fort Union at the confluence of the Missouri and the Yellowstone; Fort McKenzie on the Missouri near the mouth of the Marias, and Fort Cass on the Yellowstone at the mouth of the Bighorn. The company at one time contemplated building a post at the Three Forks, but this was never done, for the subsequent developments of the trade never required any increase in the number of these establishments. It was found that the resources of this remote country could be better exploited by the mountain trade, which was by this time thoroughly organized.

The successful work of McKenzie, by which, in the space of five years he had practically covered the whole field, and had firmly established his company in a region which had so far baffled the efforts of all traders to penetrate, is ample proof of his great executive ability. Among the schemes which he originated for the more vigorous conduct of the business was the introduction of the steamboat in the trade. As this event marks the advent of one of the most flourishing businesses and one of the most remarkable features in the frontier development of the West, it is of much historic interest. Steamboats had been used to a limited extent on the lower river for the previous decade. The first boat had entered the Missouri in 1819, and in the same year the *Western Engineer* had reached Council Bluffs. But before 1830 scarcely any steamboat business was done above the mouth of the Kansas river, and but very little below. McKenzie's scheme of taking a steamboat to the mouth of the Yellowstone river was therefore very much in the nature of an experiment, and the majority of the business men of St. Louis doubted its success. But McKenzie was the sort of man to grapple with new and hazardous enterprises, and was not afraid to undertake a measure simply because it had not been tried before. He succeeded in convincing the management at St. Louis of the practicability of the project, and it was decided to undertake it.[14]

The plan of this new enterprise was outlined in great detail by Mr. Chouteau in a letter to the house in New York written on the 30th of August, 1830. He recounted the great losses and delays, as well as the expense for men, attendant upon keelboat traffic. He thought that a small steamboat, such as could be built for about seven thousand dollars, could start up the Missouri in April and return with the proceeds of the trade by the end of June. The men required would be fewer, and barges could be retained for the trade higher up, or could return to St. Louis late in the season with furs. They would also be available in case of accidents to the steamboats. The greatest difficulty to be apprehended was from the breakage of machinery so far away from shops, and this it was hoped to overcome by taking along spare parts together with a complete blacksmith outfit. On the whole the experiment was considered worth trying, and steps were taken accordingly. The boat was contracted for in October, 1830, to be delivered on the 1st of April following. It was built in Louisville, Kentucky, and was christened the *Yellowstone*.

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[14] This decision was reached in the month of August, 1830, after a full conference with McKenzie, who arrived at St. Louis from the interior August 5. In a letter dated August 31, 1830, Mr. Chouteau says: "Nous avons en contemplation de faire bâtir un petit steamboat dans le cours de l'hiver pour le faire monter de bon printemps avec les marchandises pour la traite suivante."

The boat was completed on time, brought to St. Louis, loaded with the first fur trade cargo that any steamboat ever attempted to take to the far upper rivers, and left St. Louis on the 16th of April, 1831.[15] Captain B. Young was master of the boat, while its principal passenger was Pierre Chouteau, Jr., who made the trip for the double purpose of judging of the merits of the steamboat experiment, and of studying the situation of the trade at the various posts. The boat proceeded with fair progress until it passed the mouth of the Niobrara, about the 31st of May. Just above this point it was stopped by low water and was delayed for a considerable time. This delay was a great annoyance to Mr. Chouteau. Impatiently he waited day by day for a rise in the river. In his anxiety he would go ashore every day, and pace up and down a high river bluff watching the weather and longing for more water. The place has ever since been known as Chouteau's Bluffs. He did not, however, wait supinely for the weather, but sent for some boats from Fort Tecumseh to act as lighters. By the aid of these the steamboat was able to proceed, and arrived at the fort on the 19th of June, 1831.[16] That part of the trip which lay above Council Bluffs was traversed on this voyage for the first time by steamboats.

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[15] "Le steamboat *Yellowstone* a laissé le port le 16 à midi." B. Pratte & Co. to W. B. Astor, April 19, 1831.

[16] Chouteau to W. B. Astor, August 17, 1831: "Ce ne fut donc qu'à la faveur de trois berges, que j'envoyai chercher au Petit Missouri, et qui reçurent une grande partie de la charge, qu'il m'a été possible de me rendre avec le bateau le 19 Juin au Fort Tecumseh."

No attempt was made to go beyond Fort Tecumseh. After the business at this post was transacted the boat started for St. Louis. She made the return journey in safety and arrived in St. Louis on the 15th day of July, "with a full cargo of buffalo robes, furs, and peltries, besides ten thousand pounds of buffalo tongues." Mr. Chouteau returned convinced of the feasibility of using steamboats in his trade, and it was decided to repeat the experiment the following year.

In several respects the voyage of the *Yellowstone* in 1832 has been a landmark in the history of the West. It demonstrated the practicability of navigating the Missouri by steam as far as to the mouth of the Yellowstone with a strong probability that boats could go on to the Blackfoot country. Among the passengers was the artist, Catlin, whose works have given added celebrity to the voyage. The boat left St. Louis March 26, 1832. It made extremely slow progress, and did not reach Fort Tecumseh until the 31st of May. Here a delay of six days occurred during which the new fort, built to replace Fort Tecumseh, was christened Fort Pierre, in honor of the distinguished trader, Pierre Chouteau, Jr., who was a passenger on the boat.

Leaving Fort Pierre on the 5th of June, the boat went on to [illegible]t Union. The date of its arrival is uncertain. That given by Catlin, June 26th, is wrong, for the boat was back at Fort Pierre on the 24th. The date was about June 17th. On the return journey the *Yellowstone* left Fort Pierre on the 25th of June and reached St. Louis July 7th. Its downward trip had averaged one hundred miles per day.

This noted voyage gave great satisfaction to the company. It completed the second step in reaching the head of navigation on the Missouri by steam, the first having been accomplished from St. Louis to Council Bluffs in 1819, and the third from Fort Union to Fort Benton in 1859. From 1832 on, the Missouri river steamboat was a constant and indispensable feature of frontier life in every department until the railroad at last destroyed its usefulness.

The interest created by the voyage of the *Yellowstone* extended not only over the United States, but to Europe as well. Writing from New York, November 16, 1832, Ramsay Crooks thus addressed Mr. Chouteau upon the subject: "I congratulate you most cordially on your perseverance and ultimate success in reaching the Yellowstone by *steam*, and the future historian of the Missouri will preserve for you the honorable and enviable distinction of having accomplished an object of immense importance, by exhibiting the practicability of conquering the obstructions of the Missouri considered till almost the present day insurmountable to steamboats even among those best acquainted with their capabilities. You have brought the Falls of the Missouri as near, comparatively, as was the River Platte in my younger days." And Mr. Astor, writing from Bellevue, France, said to Mr. Chouteau: "Your voyage in the *Yellowstone* attracted much attention in Europe, and has been noted in all the papers here."

It is needless to say that the appearance of this wonderful craft made a profound impression upon the Indians. Its power against the current, as if moved by some supernatural agency, excited the keenest astonishment, and even aroused a feeling of terror. One good effect was to increase their respect for Americans. The *Missouri Republican*, commenting upon the voyage, said: "Many of the Indians who had been in the habit of trading with the Hudson Bay Company, declared that the company could no longer compete with the Americans, and concluded thereafter to bring all their skins to the latter; and said that the British might turn out their dogs and burn their sledges, as they would no longer be useful while the *Fire Boat* walked on the waters."

Reference has already been made to a subject which had an importance among the Missouri traders all out of proportion to the information which they have left concerning it. From the date of the Lewis and Clark expedition to the close of the period of this work the traders were always complaining of the British. Particularly in the earlier years of the American Fur Company's business along the boundary these complaints were loud and incessant. There was probably something in them, but how much it is impossible to say, for they were couched in general terms, and rarely gave any specific facts to support them.

McKenzie, who had been reared in the school of the Northwest Company, and understood how much importance was attached to presents by the Indians, thought it a good idea to imitate the example of the British companies, and have some medals struck in the name of the American Fur Company. Pierre Chouteau, Jr., who attached great weight to McKenzie's opinions, laid the matter before the house in New York in the same letter (August 17, 1831) in which he announced the result of the steamboat voyage to Fort Tecumseh. Referring to the proposed post in the Blackfoot country, then about to be established, he said: "It is at this establishment that we shall have to combat the opposition of the English traders, who have a fort not far distant, and who, as is their custom, will undoubtedly do everything in their power to excite the Indians against us. This difficulty might nevertheless be somewhat diminished if the government could be persuaded to place at our disposal a few presents, which would be delivered to the Indians in the name of the President of the United States. The English government, if I am well informed, allows the Northwest Company[17] an annual sum for this particular purpose. A little indulgence of this nature on the part of the government will secure the confidence and friendship of these savages toward us."

Mr. Crooks wrote to Washington, and the War Department consented that the company might make some medals on its own account. The way in which the government delegated a function which belonged only to itself, but con-

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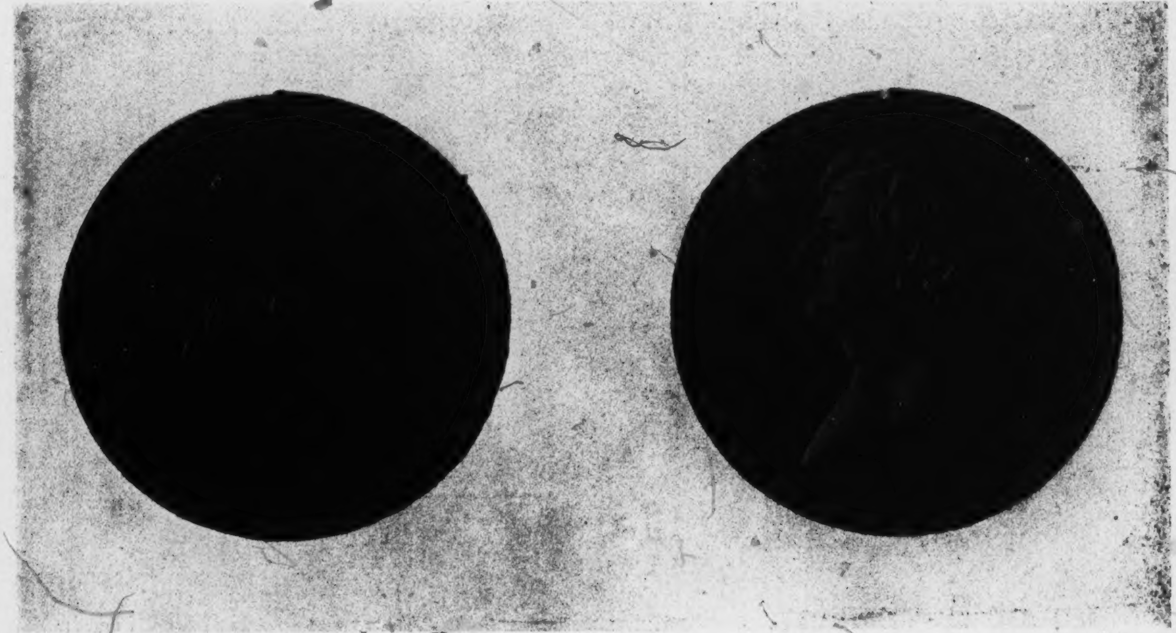
[17] This name survived in common usage after the amalgamation of 1821, when the official name became that of the Hudson Bay Company.



THE ASTOR MEDAL

cealed its action under a fiction of words, is described in a letter from Crooks to Chouteau November 16, 1832: "For Mr. McKenzie's *coat of mail* [18] I have sent to England, for nothing of the sort could be found here. His *fusil à six coups* is ordered from Rochester; and the medals for his outfit are in the hands of the die-maker, who, I hope, will give us a good likeness *de notre estimable grand-papa* [Astor]. I wrote to Washington about them, and the War Office made no objections to our having these *ornaments* made. Remember they are *ornaments,* not medals"!

These medals later gave the company trouble, when some of its enemies reported to Washington that it was usurping the functions of the government in their distribution. Some correspondence resulted but the matter was never carried up. Mr. Chouteau stated in his reply to an inquiry from Washington that "before the die for the Astor medals was struck the matter was submitted to Governor Cass, then Secretary of War, who gave his consent to the measure, and a sample of the medals was deposited with the department, accompanied by letters of the President of the American Fur Company." The privilege of using these medals was discontinued by order of the Secretary of War, March 22, 1844.[19]

By means of the intelligent and energetic measures described in the few preceding pages the American Fur Company extended and consolidated its trade upon the upper rivers. The unpleasant task remains to record those less honorable measures which it did not scruple to resort to for the accomplishment of its purposes.

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[18] What McKenzie proposed to do with his coat of mail can only be conjectured. It may simply have been an adjunct to the high state which he maintained in the remote post where he ruled as lord of the country round about.

[19] Only two or three of the Astor medals are known to be now in existence. The photograph here reproduced is of one in possession of Mr. F. J. Haynes, of St. Paul. It is also understood that there is one in the possession of the Chouteaus of St. Louis, and another in the possession of the Astors. The origin and history of the medals have never before been given.

CHAPTER XXI.

THE AMERICAN FUR COMPANY.

STRESS OF COMPETITION.

Standards of business — Dealing with opposition companies — The French Fur Company — The affair with Leclerc — The Sublette-Campbell opposition — McKenzie victorious — Arrangement with Sublette and Campbell — Importance of liquor in the trade — McKenzie depressed at the outlook — The distillery project — Voyage of 1833 — Distillery established at Fort Union — Successful operation — Wyeth reports McKenzie — General Clark calls for an explanation — The operation of the distillery suspended — Dangerous complications.

IN regard to the standard of business morality observed in the affairs of the American Fur Company, it was simply that of the business world today — no better, no worse. The ruthless code of competition which finds expression in the correspondence of Pierre Chouteau, Jr., in such instructions as *coûte que coûte* and *écrasez toute opposition,* is the world wide rule of business affairs. The only difference between the American Fur Company and the great concerns of modern times is in the fact that the fur business was mostly conducted where the arm of the law did not reach. The merciless rivalry, which is now toned down by force of law to an outward semblance of equitable dealing, broke out in its true hideous colors when beyond the reach of legal jurisdiction. Competition, which even in this day precipitates unseemly railroad wars, then meant war of the genuine sort. It is difficult to exaggerate the state of affairs which at times prevailed. "The company," by which is always meant the American Fur Company, was thoroughly hated even by its own servants. Throughout its career it was an object of popular execration, as all grasping monopolies are. Many are the stories, largely exaggerated, no doubt, that have come down to us of its hard and cruel ways. Small traders stood no show whatever and the most desperate measures were resorted to without scruple to get them out of the way. Many an employe, it is said, who had finished his term of service and had started for St. Louis with a letter of credit for his pay fell by the way and was reported as killed by the Indians. These harsher features of a heartless business it is difficult to believe, but the fact that such traditions have persisted even to the present day is not compatible with the theory of entire innocence.

The first step always taken in dealing with an "opposition" was to crush it by sheer force if possible. When that did not succeed an attempt would be made to buy it out, admit it to an interest in the company, or divide the field with it. In one way or another the American Fur Company succeeded in maintaining itself against all comers, although it was sometimes badly frightened, and occasionally came near calling down upon itself the strong arm of the government. A few examples will be given.

The first opposition which the American Fur Company had to contend with after its union with the Columbia Fur Company was what was then known as the French Fur Company. It is thus referred to in a letter from Chouteau to McKenzie written July 5, 1829: "It now remains for me to tell you of the new company which is lately formed here, consisting of eight partners, who are Messrs. Papin, Chenie fils, the two Cerrés, Delaurier, Picotte, Denis Guion and Louis Bonfort, with an equipment of $16,000, of which each partner contributes an equal share. These gentlemen have done, and are still doing, everything in their power to debauch all our clerks. . . . You can not but see how important it is for our future interests to make every effort this year to arrest this opposition from the start." This company, like most associations where all enter on equal terms without subordination of members to duly constituted officials, had a brief and inglorious career. It occupied numerous positions in the upper Missouri country close to the American Fur Company posts and commenced business with the usual bravado and pretense employed by concerns of its calibre. But it made no permanent impression anywhere. It maintained a lingering existence for two years and then sold out to the company. The transfer of its principal establishment, which stood just across the Teton river from Fort Tecumseh, took place October 14, 1830. Papin, Picotte, and one of the Cerrés entered the company's service.

In the year 1831 one Narcisse Leclerc,[1] late an employe of the company, having laid by a small saving which some associates eked out to a respectable amount, concluded to try his own hand at the business. As he had gained considerable knowledge of the trade, the company felt that he might give them some annoyance, and his first year's work tended to confirm this apprehension. It was resolved to get rid of his opposition before he should get up the river with his outfit in 1832. How to do this was not so easy a matter, for although there was as yet no legal jurisdiction in the remote region where the trade was conducted, yet the very license of the company was dependent upon the government authorities, who might and would revoke it if convinced that it was being abused. Whatever was done must therefore be under color of the law. The problem was left to J. P. Cabanne, an enterprising agent of the company in charge of its affairs near Council Bluffs. He was authorized in extremity to offer Leclerc a cash payment if he would not go as far up the river as the Sioux country, but confine himself to the trade below. Soon after Leclerc set out up the river with his outfit, Cabanne left St. Louis for his post where he arrived considerably in advance of Leclerc.

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[1] Leclerc was a shrewd character and quite a match in craftiness for those with whom he had to deal. He was outfitted by Henry Shaw under the style of the Northwest Fur Company. He cherished a full share of the general dislike for the American Fur Company and its agents. Referring to Leclerc and his first expedition in 1831, Laidlaw said to McKenzie in a letter from Fort Tecumseh, November 27, 1831: "I have heard nothing of Leclerc since I last wrote you, and as the ice is now drifting a little, I am in hopes he will not get up this far. But even if he does, I am well prepared for him and shall have some one at his heels all the time. He told Papin that nothing would do him so much good as to go puffing a cigar alongside of you and put on a dignified look. I expect the gentleman would take care not to get too close."

In the meantime circumstances had thrown in Cabanne's way an excuse for adopting radical measures. When the company's steamboat came down the river from its Yellowstone trip of 1832 the master of the boat was informed at Leavenworth that no more liquor would be allowed to pass that point as the importation of that article into the Indian country had been prohibited by law.[2] Nevertheless Leclerc was authorized by General William Clark, Superintendent of Indian Affairs, to take with him two hundred and fifty gallons of alcohol. Chouteau protested against this, but General Clark would not revoke the license, as it seems he had not yet been officially notified of the passage of the new law. He gave to Chouteau also authority to send with the company's outfit one thousand four hundred gallons. Knowing that it would be too late if he waited until the following spring Chouteau turned the *Yellowstone* about and sent her to Council Bluffs with an outfit including the liquor. When the boat reached Leavenworth the liquor was all confiscated. Leclerc, on the other hand, either by favor or subterfuge, had succeeded in getting by with his, and was already safe on his way to the Indian country and well out of reach before the news got back to St. Louis. The prospect looked dubious enough to the company, for two hundred and fifty gallons of alcohol judiciously used would be hard to contend against. It was too late to remedy the evil and nothing but Cabanne's ingenuity now stood in the way of an embarrassing opposition.

A few days before Leclerc reached Bellevue three of Cabanne's men deserted, carrying off one of his skiffs. On the way down the river, they met Leclerc and hired out to him. Cabanne himself met Leclerc about twenty miles below his post whither he had gone with some Indian annuities. He demanded restitution of the deserters, but having no force with him, could not compel their release. When they arrived at Bellevue he had his men seize them and put them in irons. They told Cabanne that Leclerc had a lot of liquor in his outfit. This information gave Cabanne the pretext he wanted. Here was a trader clandestinely violating the law by carrying liquor into the Indian country. He would stop the illegal transaction and thereby put an end to the whole expedition. It seems not to have occurred to Cabanne that the enforcement of law is entrusted only to duly accredited officials and that he was not one of these; that his only power in the case was to report Leclerc to the proper authorities. He did not worry himself about fine distinctions of that sort. Instead, he sent his clerk — Sarpy, a man of courage and spirit — with an armed party, equipped with a small cannon, to capture Leclerc and his whole outfit. In this party was Joseph La Barge,[3] then a lad of only seventeen, on his first trip to the Indian country. This rude initiation into the life of the wilderness made a lasting impression upon him. Sarpy took his party to a point above the post which commanded the river where the channel lay very close to the shore. When Leclerc came along he ordered him to surrender or he would blow him out of the water. This Leclerc did promptly, and perhaps willingly, and party and outfit were escorted back to the post, where the liquor was confiscated and put in the warehouse. It is said that Cabanne offered to restore the goods to Leclerc, but if he did so, Leclerc declined, for he was too shrewd not to see that he could gather a better winter's trade back in St. Louis than he could at his trading posts. It is not probable that the offer was made, and certainly not unless Cabanne had become alarmed at the consequences of his arbitrary proceeding and thus sought to avert them.

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[2] Act of July 9, 1832.

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[3] Joseph La Barge, the most distinguished of the Missouri river pilots, was born in St. Louis October 1, 1815, and died in the same city, April 3, 1899. Nearly all his active life was spent in steamboating on the Missouri. He made and lost a fortune at the business. He served for many years on the American Fur Company steamboats. He was a man of high character and the best representative of a class of men — the Missouri River Pilot — whose business has entirely passed away.

At any rate Leclerc hastened back to St. Louis and brought suit against the company, while criminal proceedings were instituted against Cabanne. The matter was carried to Washington and an outcry was made against permitting the company longer to remain in the Indian country. The exigency was certainly a grave one for the company and required all its ingenuity and resources to avert disaster. For Cabanne the case seemed quite hopeless, threatening him with financial ruin, if nothing worse.[4] A compromise was finally reached by paying Leclerc the sum of $9,200, which was charged to the account of the Upper Missouri Outfit.

In a letter to Joshua Pilcher who had succeeded Cabanne at Bellevue, notifying him of the outcome of the case, Chouteau expressed his regret that Cabanne, instead of resorting to such heroic measures, had not offered Leclerc outright a thousand dollars not to go so far as to interfere with the trade of the upper river. This observation effectually explodes the claim of the company and of Cabanne, put forward with such a show of innocence, that their sole purpose in stopping Leclerc was to prevent his violating the law. Their object was to keep him out of the trade, and the presence of the liquor gave them a pretext to accomplish their purpose by a short cut. Cabanne succeeded in this perfectly, but in so doing he ruined his own career in the Indian country.

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[4] "If it were not for the unreasonable excitement that exists against our friend in Missouri, and which no doubt great pains will be taken to keep alive, I should not despair of Mr. Cabanne's escaping with light damages or perhaps acquittal. The strong point of defence, in my opinion, should be that at the time Leclerc was stopped and brought back he was violating the law of the land excluding ardent spirits entirely from the Indian country; that General Clark's permission was no protection after the Act of July 9, 1832, was published, and with its provisions Mr. Leclerc was bound to be acquainted. You have, however, I dare say, the best advice your country affords, but it seems to me that in case of defeat I would appeal the case to the Supreme Court of the United States." W. B. Astor to Chouteau, March 14, 1833.

The strongest opposition which the American Fur Company ever encountered on the Missouri was that of the firm of Sublette and Campbell which was formed on the 20th of December, 1832. Both of the partners were experienced traders and of the highest business standing. Supported as they were by General Ashley, then a member of Congress, their credit was practically unlimited and there were any number of capitalists who were ready to furnish them means. Immediately after the partnership was formed preparation was made to oppose the American Fur Company at all points with an equipment which should equal or surpass their own. Coming, as this opposition did, just at the time when McKenzie felt that he was at last firmly established in all the region of the upper Missouri and Yellowstone, it was not pleasant news to that ambitious trader. But the peril, far from discouraging him, served only to strengthen his determination to succeed in spite of it.

Sublette and Campbell divided their forces for the summer campaign of 1833. Campbell took a party to the mountains and met the Rocky Mountain Fur Company at the Green river rendezvous in the middle of July. Thence he made his way to the mouth of the Yellowstone where he arrived with Milton Sublette, N. J. Wyeth and others August 24th. In the meanwhile Sublette had ascended the Missouri in the steamboat *Otto* with a splendid equipment, leaving parties to establish posts at nearly all the points occupied by the American Fur Company. At some point on the way, probably at Pierre or Clark, he sent the steamboat back and himself went on with a keelboat to the mouth of the Yellowstone. Here he met Campbell and Milton Sublette on the 27th of August, and immediately set about selecting a site for a post. That chosen was on the north bank of the Missouri opposite the mouth of the Yellowstone, almost exactly where Fort Buford afterward stood, and about three miles by land or six by water below Fort Union. The post was christened Fort William in honor of the elder Sublette. Having made his arrangements he left Campbell to conduct affairs at this important station while he returned with the keelboat to St. Louis.

The success of this new and really formidable opposition during the fall trade of 1833 may best be told by Mr. McKenzie himself, bearing in mind the natural desire of the narrator to make out a good case in his own behalf. The account is, however, substantially correct as shown by evidence derived from the opposition itself. Writing to D. D. Mitchell, at Fort McKenzie under date of January 21, 1834, Mr. McKenzie said: "Sublette and Campbell arrived here August 29th, and soon fixed on a site for their fort which they have built two miles below me and called Fort William. They came up in great force with a very large outfit and abundance of alcohol and wines highly charged with spirits. They engaged the three young Deschamps as interpreters at salaries of $500 per annum each, and Tom Kipland at $600. They had, moreover, a full complement of clerks and seemed prepared to carry all before them, nothing doubting but that they would secure at least one half the trade of the country. They abandoned the idea of sending to the Blackfeet this season. They started a small equipment on horses to the Crow village on Wind river. They were expected to return early in December but have not yet been heard of. Mr. Winter and J. Beckwith passed the fall in the Crow camp and traded all their beaver. While Mr. Winter was with the Crows Mr. Fitzpatrick of the R. M. F. Co. (my friend Captain Stewart was with him) arrived with thirty men, one hundred horses, and mules, merchandise, etc., etc., and encamped near the village. He had not been long there before a large party paid him a visit and pillaged everything he had, taking even the watch from his pocket and the capote from his back; also driving off all his horses. This has been a severe blow to Sublette and Campbell. And although on their first start here they made great show and grand promise to the Indians and although among the men nothing was talked about but the new company, they live now at the sign of 'The case is altered.' Their interpreters have quarreled and left them, and are now working hard for me. The Indians find their promises mere empty words and are applying continually to me to engage them. They have a post near to Rivière au Tremble in opposition to Chardon where they are doing literally nothing. Chardon has it all his own way. They have another post on the Yellowstone in opposition to Pillot and Brazeau and there they get no robes although they offer a blanket of scarlet for a robe.

"You must be aware that I have not been asleep this fall. It has cost me something to secure the Indians to me, but being determined to get the peltries, nothing has been neglected that would carry my point. My opponents can not by any means get peltries sufficient to pay the wages of their men. At the Gros Ventres and Mandans they have not even robes to sleep on. At the Mandans my last account states that Picotte has eighty packs of robes and five hundred beaver, the opposition two packs of robes and eight beaver, and I hope things are equally promising lower down. On my return from Fort Pierre, Mr. Campbell called on me. W. Sublette had previously gone down stream on his way to St. Louis and proposed to sell out to me all their interest on the river. I listened to his terms, but was by no means disposed to buy out an opposition, when all my old experienced and faithful clerks and tradesmen felt so certain of driving them out; especially on my giving them carte blanche with respect to trade at their respective posts, of course to be used with discretion but with this condition, that all peltries must be secured for the A. F. Co. and thus far I have no reason to complain. The new company is now in bad odor and must sink."

That McKenzie's estimate of his success was not much exaggerated is clear from the evidence of Charles Larpenteur who at this time was in the employ of Campbell at Fort William. "The Indians," he said, "had no confidence in his [Campbell's] remaining, so that the bulk of the trade went to the big American Fur Company in spite of all we could do. . . . . This post [Fort William] was not the only one that was out of luck for all those along the Missouri proved a failure."

How did McKenzie accomplish this? Very much as the Standard Oil Company today crushes any rival enterprise that may dare to show its head in any part of the United States. His letter to Mitchell shows that. The "*carte blanche*" to the clerks simply meant that they might pay the Indians any price, however high, for furs, and might make use of any amount of liquor that was necessary to secure the trade. At the Mandan post as high as twelve dollars was paid for beaver skins. McKenzie might well say "it has cost me something to secure the Indians to me" when in order to do it he was compelled to pay four times the usual price for furs. Of course such competition wiped out all profits and it was simply a question of resources as to which competitor could hold out the longer. In this McKenzie with the great company at his back had every advantage; and his victory was practically won at the close of the season's trade.

So confident did McKenzie feel of his ability to drive off his competitors that he would not even listen to their overtures to sell out to him. He was therefore much chagrined when he found that the house at St. Louis had taken the matter into their own hands without consulting him and had entered into an arrangement with Sublette. The fact was that the home officials were a good deal more frightened than McKenzie and thought it best to come to terms. Their action and the reasons for it are thus explained in a letter to McKenzie dated April 8, 1834: "By the enclosed agreement you will see that we have concluded an arrangement at New York with Mr. Sublette. We take such of his equipment in merchandise, utensils, etc., as remains at the close of the season's trade and we retire from the mountain trade for the ensuing year. . . . In making this arrangement our object was to keep Sublette from purchasing a new equipment and from connecting himself with houses that were making him all sorts of offers. His reputation and that of his patron, Ashley, whatever may be the cause, are far above their worth. Nevertheless such is the fact and it is enough to procure them unlimited credit. It is this which induced us to offer to buy them out. . . . We hope, therefore, that, taking all things into consideration you will approve of the transaction."

This was the end of the Sublette-Campbell enterprise on the Missouri and it left the American Fur Company untrammeled by any serious opposition for several years to come. The arrangement is the only one by which the fur territory was ever divided among the traders, and this was only for a single year. The many statements in contemporary accounts of these events, that the American and Rocky Mountain Fur Companies entered into agreements of this character, are without foundation.

In all of McKenzie's work, as just narrated, there was nothing for which he can be properly criticised. He had done nothing that is not recognized the world over as legitimate business. It does not appear that he was privy to the robbery of Fitzpatrick, however glad he may have been that it took place. Nowhere in his relations with his competitors did he treat them more severely than the recognized code of business permits, and his standing with his opponents was as high as with his own people. But, unfortunately, under the heavy strain of competition of the year 1832, he permitted himself to take a false step, which, like that of Cabanne in the Leclerc affair, ended his usefulness in the Indian country.

Among the articles of trade, as already explained, which were exchanged for the furs of the Indians, liquor was by far the most important. It is indeed impossible to exaggerate its importance; and it is only by an intimate understanding of the conditions of the business that one can account for the almost frantic appeals which were continually pouring into St. Louis for more liquor. "Liquor we must have or we might as well give up," is a sample of the complaints which burdened the correspondence of the traders. It was impossible to conduct the trade without it if one's opponents were provided with it. The only alternative was to retire from the field. The Act of July 9, 1832, prohibiting absolutely the introduction of liquor into the Indian country, was therefore simply appalling to McKenzie. Here was the great opposition of Sublette and Campbell which he must encounter the following year. He had no confidence that they would be held to the law by the inspectors and he knew that if they were they would smuggle liquor by them. He had learned from experience that the great prominence of the American Fur Company made such clandestine work doubly difficult, for the company was always operating as it were in the enemy's country, where there was a spy at every turn.

One point in McKenzie's mind was settled from the start. Law or no law he must be equipped with liquor when the outfit of Sublette and Campbell should come to oppose him. His first move was to go to Washington and New York and see if he could not effect some modification of the regulation for enforcing the law. The stock argument on such occasions always was that the liquor was wanted only to resist the competition of British traders who made free use of it along the line. McKenzie was entirely unsuccessful in his mission, and returned to St. Louis with gloomy forebodings of the future.[5] There was no course now open, apart from extensive smuggling, which was an extremely perilous business for the company at that time, except to carry out an ingenious and radical measure, which for some time had been developing in McKenzie's mind. This was nothing less than to open up a distillery at Fort Union and commence the manufacture of liquor on his own account. He would be within the law, he reasoned, because that forbade only the *importation* of liquor into the Indian country! To such feeble subterfuges did the exigencies of the fur trade drive men of real and unquestioned ability! The house in St. Louis took legal advice in the matter, and, astonishing as it may seem, succeeded in getting an opinion in favor of the project. Armed with this they made bold to disregard the advice of that sage counselor in New York, Ramsay Crooks, who earnestly besought them to abandon any thought of so hazardous a venture. In the letter quoted in the footnote above he said: "The excitement against us is undoubtedly greater than it ought to be, but whether well or ill founded, the effect is not the less injurious, and we are looked upon by many as an association determined to engross the trade of the upper Missouri, by fair means if we can, but by foul proceedings if nothing short will ensure our objects. With such a reputation it becomes us to be more than usually circumspect in all we do. Every eye is upon us, and whoever can will annoy us with all his heart. It will therefore, in my opinion, be madness to attempt your Cincinnati project of the *Boxes,* or the *Alembique.*" What *Boxes* refers to does not elsewhere appear, but the *Alembique* scheme grew into a shining reality, which very soon justified Crooks' opinion of it as a scheme of "madness."

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[5] "The total exclusion of ardent spirits, and the difficulties that may grow out of our friend Cabanne's imprudent course toward Leclerc, have disheartened Mr. McKenzie very much, and he parted with me [at Washington] in desponding anticipations of the future." Crooks to Chouteau, February 17, 1833.

Referring to the competition of British traders which the Western Department had represented to the house in New York as the principal reason why they must use liquor in the trade, and to overtures on the part of the United States to Great Britain that both nations prohibit the traffic along the border, Mr. Crooks said: "If the Government of Britain reject the proposal, their object will evidently be to drive us out of the country, and deprive the United States of a trade which justly belongs to her citizens; and I can not allow myself to believe that after such unequivocal proof of their real intentions, our own Government will persist in denying us the use of ardent spirits so far as the article is required to place us on an equal footing with our commercial rivals. But still, if in the face of reason and common sense, the Executive will not have the law so modified as to afford us a fair chance with our Hudson Bay opponents, I would, hard as it is, rather abandon the trade, than violate the statute if that was necessary to sustain ourselves against them."

Unhappily these wiser counsels did not prevail. A still was procured and arrangements were made to put it into early operation. Two boats went up the river in the spring of 1833, the *Yellowstone* and a new boat, the *Assiniboine*. On the *Yellowstone* were two distinguished passengers, McKenzie himself, and Maximilian Prince of Wied, whose journey to the upper river on this occasion has done so much to preserve the early history of that country. The voyage passed off prosperously enough until Fort Leavenworth was reached. McKenzie had determined to try his luck in getting some liquor past the inspectors, but his attempt quickly came to grief. The inspection was very strict. Maximilian lamented that "they would scarcely permit us to take a small portion to preserve our specimens of natural history." McKenzie wrote to Chouteau from the Black Snake Hills (St. Joseph) to the following effect: "We have been robbed of all our liquors, say seven barrels shrub, one of rum, one of wine and all the fine men and sailors' whiskey which was in two barrels. They kicked and knocked about everything they could find and even cut through our bales of blankets which had never been undone since they were put up in England." It is apparent that the inspectors handled the cargo without ceremony, and that all the liquor was confiscated. The affair worried McKenzie, as he said, so much that he could not rest. He had obtained what seemed to be indisputable proof that Sublette and Campbell had on their steamboat one hundred of the flat alcohol kegs used in the mountains. "The more I think of it," he wrote, "the clearer I see the injury we are going to sustain by being deprived of that article." To add to his anxiety he had so far failed to find a suitable man for operating his distillery. But he had to make a virtue of necessity and go on handicapped as he was.

On his way up he put off a force of laborers at the mouth of the Iowa river to start a corn plantation, for it was upon corn that he would mainly have to rely for his distillery. He probably took along a cargo of corn from Council Bluffs on his way. At Fort Pierre the *Yellowstone* turned back, while McKenzie and Maximilian went on in the *Assiniboine* and arrived without further incident at Fort Union on the 24th of June.

The distillery was at once set up and was in operation when Wyeth passed Fort Union two months later. There is abundant evidence that the experiment was a complete success. McKenzie was greatly elated over the result, for it placed him on a footing of independence and unquestioned superiority over his rivals. His letters on the subject, written in the following December, are interesting reading. To Chouteau he wrote: "Our manufactory flourishes admirably. We only want corn to keep us going. The Mandan corn yields badly but makes a fine, sweet liquor. Do not load the boat too heavily at St. Louis, that a few hundred bushels of corn may be placed on board at the Bluffs. . . Surely you will contrive some means of passing alcohol to the Bluffs for the Sioux trade. It is hard that new hands and limited means should have such advantages over us." And to Crooks in reference to Sublette and Campbell: "We have every advantage that experience of the Indian trade and knowledge of the Indians can give, but at the lower posts they have abundance of alcohol and we are destitute, and you know how fond some Indians are of strong water. For this post I have established a manufactory of strong water. It succeeds admirably. I have a good corn mill, a respectable distillery, and can produce as fine a liquor as need be drunk. I believe that no law of the United States is thereby broken [!] though perhaps one may be made to break up my distillery. But liquor I must have or quit any pretension to trade in this part." By the same express he sent a letter to Pilcher at Council Bluffs urging him to send up a good supply of corn in the spring, or, he added "my wine vats will be idle."

But alas! at the very moment in which McKenzie was writing his exultant letter to his chief in St. Louis, the latter was agitated with very different emotions, for he had but lately experienced in a forcible way the truth of the adage that the way of the transgressor is not an easy one. The distillery business had been reported to the United States Government, and mischief enough was to pay. It happened in this way: On August 24, 1833, there arrived at Fort Union that irrepressible Yankee adventurer, Nathaniel J. Wyeth, who was on his way east in the interests of his business. With him was also M. S. Cerré, Captain Bonneville's principal man. McKenzie received these gentlemen with true fur trader hospitality, in which he had been admirably schooled during his service with the British Northwest Company. His house was wide open to his guests. He gave them the best that he had — bread, cheese, milk, excellent meat, and even wine — luxuries which they had not tasted for many a long month. He showed them about his post, explained everything, and in his enthusiasm so far forgot his wonted discretion as to permit them to see the distillery. The guests were most agreeably impressed with the liberality of their host, and probably would have left him with a sense of obligation that would have put a bridle on their tongues, had it not been for a circumstance that marked the close of their visit. They bought a considerable quantity of supplies from McKenzie, and applied to him for some liquor. They then quickly learned the difference between the generous host and the competing trader. No liquor was to be had. McKenzie was not going to arm his opponents with the most powerful weapon which they could wield against him. When they came to make settlement for their purchases they again found that they were dealing with the trader and no longer with the host. There was no hospitality in the prices charged, which were all on the basis of the exorbitant retail prices of the Indian country. Wyeth and Cerré were indignant at this treatment, but, smothering their resentment, they settled their bills without a murmur and bided their time for revenge.

The opportunity was not long delayed. When the irate travelers arrived at Fort Leavenworth they appeared before an Indian agent at that place and made affidavit to the facts that they had observed at Fort Union, and alleged that the American Fur Company was there "making and vending whiskey in quantity." The agent promptly wrote to General Wm. Clark, Superintendent of Indian Affairs in St. Louis, setting forth the information contained in the affidavits. General Clark in turn wrote to Pierre Chouteau, Jr., November 14th, enclosing the communication from the Indian agent, and asking for such explanation as he should "think proper to give." Nine days later Chouteau returned an answer which, for ingenuity, surpassed even the distillery scheme itself. After protesting ignorance that operations were being carried on at Union "in the manner and to the extent stated," and disclaiming all responsibility for such unauthorized acts, he gave the following statement of the extent of the company's connection with the matter: "The company, believing that wild pears and berries might be converted into wine (which they did not understand to be prohibited), did authorize experiments to be made, and if, under color of this, ardent spirits have been distilled and vended, it is without the knowledge, authority, or direction of the company, and I will take measures, by sending immediately an express to arrest the operation complained of, if found to exist." The express was sent and the disappointed McKenzie was destined to see his brilliant prospects blasted in their bloom.

In sending the express, Chouteau so far forgot his own part in the affair as to administer a rebuke to McKenzie for "having placed the company in an unpleasant situation." McKenzie was cut to the quick, and replied that while he was perfectly willing to be made the scapegoat in the affair, providing "the company be thereby benefited," yet he would not permit the imputation that he had taken any step to which the management at St. Louis was not a party. In spite of his irritation, however, he hastened to his patron's assistance, and fabricated two letters designed to furnish a plausible explanation of the presence of the distillery at Fort Union. The purport of them was that a friend of McKenzie, living in the Red River colony, had asked him to purchase a still while he was in the States in the spring of 1833, and have it sent to Pembina. McKenzie did this and transported it up the river as far as Fort Union. While holding it there until called for, an American citizen, who knew something about its operation, had turned up at the fort and requested permission to experiment with it upon the "fruits of the country." The request was granted, the distillery set up, and the manufacture of "wine" was begun. The result was satisfactory and a "very palatable article" was produced; but the whole affair was in the nature of a passing experiment, and had no relation to the company's business.

Neither Chouteau's lame excuse to General Clark nor McKenzie's feeble invention served to exculpate the company. The news quickly reached Washington both through official channels and through the many enemies of the company. The government authorities were highly incensed at this obvious contempt of law, and coming as it did upon the heels of the Leclerc incident and Fitzpatrick's robbery,* it came very near proving disastrous. The company had a life and death struggle and it was only by a dangerously narrow margin that it saved its license. How great was the peril may be judged from the following letter sent by the house in St. Louis to McKenzie in the spring of 1834. Referring to the express of the previous winter which went up with orders to stop the use of the distillery, the letter says: "In asking you to stop at once its operation, we now urgently renew the request, and however painful it may be to destroy an establishment which promised such excellent results, it is nevertheless of the most urgent necessity to submit. Otherwise we shall expose ourselves to the greatest embarrassments. It was only by the assurance of our Mr. Chouteau to the Secretary of War that we would conform to the government regulations pertaining to the Indian trade that the affair has not been followed up. Under these circumstances we think it will be prudent to send the still down or to dispose of it otherwise so that it may give offense to no one."[1]

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* "In a letter to General Ashley, Fitzpatrick accuses the company of having instigated the savages to commit certain depredations of which he was the victim, and it appears that this letter has been sent to the Department of Indian Affairs. The dragoons will perhaps be ordered to make a tour along the base of the mountains, and in that case it is possible that they will pay you a visit. You will therefore prepare for their reception and especially for any *searches* which they may make if they go." Chouteau to McKenzie, April 8, 1834.

The distillery incident seems to have practically closed McKenzie's career in the Indian country. He came down the river in the summer of 1834 and visited Europe. Upon his return he went back to Union for a short time, but soon left the country and established himself at St. Louis.

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[1] On what special plea the company through its political backer, Senator Benton, succeeded in averting disaster is not now very clear, but a hint at the crafty methods employed is furnished in the following letter from Crooks to Chouteau, February 23, 1834: "The General tells me that you had the address to persuade Judge H——— that your distillery at the Yellowstone was only intended to promote the cause of botany. But *prenez-y-garde*. Don't presume too much on your recent escape from an accusation which might have been attended with serious consequences. The less of this sort of business you do, the better, for the time may, and very probably will, come when you will be exposed by the endless number of spies you have around you."

CHAPTER XXII.

THE AMERICAN FUR COMPANY.

1834 - 1843.

Mr. Astor retires — Pratte, Chouteau and Company — The mountain trade — Pierre Chouteau, Jr., and Company — Opposition in the year 1842 — Andrew Drips made Indian agent — Liquor at Fort Platte — Fox, Livingston and Company — Experience of Mr. Kelsey — Mr. Cutting and the Assiniboine chief — Fox, Livingston and Company retire — Battle of Fort McKenzie — Situation in 1843.

THE year 1834 witnessed a momentous change in the American Fur Company — nothing less than the retirement of its founder from further connection with its affairs. Mr. Astor had for several years meditated this move. He was now advanced in life, and his great wealth relieved him from the necessity of concerning himself in the future with the exacting cares of business life. But like all earnest and active men, he could not easily bring himself to the point of actual retirement. The reluctance to yield to the truth that age is coming on, together with the real interest which a man of business never ceases to feel in active affairs, made it difficult for him to let go of the company which he, single-handed, had created. It was a monument to his genius such as few men have been able to erect, and it was endeared to him by the very struggles which he had passed through and the difficulties which he had been compelled to overcome. We may well appreciate the force of Mr. Crooks' remark in a letter to Mr. Chouteau while the negotiations for the transfer were going on, that "the business seems to him like an only child and he can not muster courage to part with it." This was written in March, 1833.

It was only three months later that Mr. Astor, from Geneva, Switzerland, addressed the following letter to Messrs. Bernard Pratte and Company, St. Louis, Missouri: "Gentlemen—Wishing to retire from the concern in which I am engaged with your house, you will please to take this as notice thereof, and that the engagement entered into on the 7th of May, 1830, between your house and me, on the part of the American Fur Company, will expire with the outfit of the present year on the terms expressed in said agreement."

Mr. Astor was no doubt partly influenced to take this step in view of impending changes which he foresaw must soon overtake the fur trade. While in London the summer before he had noted the beginning of the downfall of the beaver trade. He said in a letter written at the time: "I very much fear beaver will not sell well very soon unless very fine. It appears that they make hats of silk in place of beaver."

The negotiations thus initiated by Mr. Astor himself came to a termination on the 1st of June, 1834, when the Northern Department, retaining the name of American Fur Company, was sold to a company of which Ramsay Crooks was the principal partner, and the Western Department to Pratte, Chouteau and Company of St. Louis.[1]

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[1] "Mr. J. J. Astor having decided to retire from business, our relations with him have in consequence terminated and our house is today under the style of Pratte, Chouteau and Company. As a consequence of this change, we have found it necessary to make an arrangement with Mr. Sublette by which we make mutual concessions. He is to abandon the Missouri trade and we that of the mountains, after the present expedition, it is understood." Pratte, Chouteau and Company, April 9, 1834.

By a letter of the previous day to McKenzie the latter was requested to come to St. Louis and renew the arrangement with the Upper Missouri Outfit for the next four years.

In adjusting the affairs of the company at this time an appraisement was made of the various posts by representatives of both parties. Mr. Astor's man estimated their value at $8,250, and Pratte, Chouteau and Company's representatives at $4,500. These figures show how flimsy most of these structures must have been.

By this important arrangement the American Fur Company retired permanently from the Western trade, which now reverted to the control of the St. Louis traders. The company had been at St. Louis just twelve years, and in that time had established itself beyond the power of any rival concern seriously to disturb it. Although the name American Fur Company did not properly apply to the new firm, it was nevertheless, in popular usage, retained for many years to come.

The affairs of the company during the decade from 1834 to 1843 present nothing of unusual interest. The business continued under the regular routine and no serious opposition arose until 1842. The arrangement with Sublette and Campbell for a division of the fur trade territory did not operate to keep the American Fur Company out of the mountains. Fontenelle took out parties in both the years 1834 and 1835. Fitzpatrick, Sublette, and Bridger severed their connection with Sublette in 1834, and formed a partnership with Fontenelle, thus merging the remnants of the expiring Rocky Mountain Fur Company with its great rival on the Missouri. Sublette's new post on the Laramie was bought by Fontenelle and his associates at about the same time and the American Fur Company thus established itself in the last of its great depots of trade. Fort John, as this post came to be known, ranked with McKenzie, Cass, and Clark in importance.

The mountain trade had never succeeded well with the American Fur Company. Their expeditions were scarcely ever on the ground in time to compete with their indefatigable rivals of the Rocky Mountain Company.[2] They lost heavily from the Indians, and on the whole the trade was far from being profitable. The management at St. Louis became thoroughly tired of this branch of the business, and it was only the fear of loss of prestige with the Indians and trappers that kept them from abandoning it altogether. The following reference to this subject in a letter from Chouteau to Astor, written May 4, 1833, illustrates the views of the Western Department: "I am convinced that these expeditions have been an annual loss. But we have hoped for improvement from year to year. Generally the loss falls upon the traders. If the expeditions to the upper Missouri had confined themselves entirely to the trade [at regular posts] its returns would have been greater and its expenses much less. Nevertheless, in spite of the unfavorable prospect, I do not think it politic to abandon this trade for the present. Just at the time when Sublette and Company are opposing us on the Missouri it is not for us to leave the mountains exclusively to them."

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[2] "We have always been too late [at rendezvous] and our opponents in the country make a great boast of it." Fontenelle to Chouteau, July 31, 1833, from the rendezvous on Green river.

The mountain business therefore went on much as before. The command of the annual expeditions, after the death of Fontenelle in 1836, was given to Andrew Drips, who retained it until as late as 1840. James Bridger also conducted trapping parties through the mountains for several years in the interest of the American Fur Company.[3] About 1840 or 1841 he was associated with Benito Vasquez in charge of an extensive outfit. These two men continued in partnership for several years, and in 1843 built the noted fort on Black's Fork of Green river to which Bridger's name was given. This event marks the termination of the organized fur trade of the Rocky mountains.

In the year 1838 the company management underwent another modification in which the name was changed from Pratte, Chouteau and Company to Pierre Chouteau, Jr., and Company — a name which continued nearly, if not quite, to the date when the company retired permanently from the business.[4]

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[3] An important event in Rocky mountain history should be placed to the credit of the mountain expeditions of the American Fur Company. In the spring of 1834, W. A. Ferris, who had spent the winter among the Flatheads, made a visit to the Upper Geyser Basin of the Yellowstone Park. He went from a point near where Beaver Canon, Idaho, now is and was at the Upper Basin May 20, 1834. His account of this visit, published in the *Western Literary Messenger*, of Buffalo, New York, is the first published account of this region.

In the year 1842 the company was again considerably perturbed by the presence of an imposing opposition. No fewer than six rival companies were in the field, some of them for the first time. Lupton and Bent and St. Vrain operated mainly in the territory to the southwest. The principal opposition on the Missouri was Fox, Livingston and Company, and William P. May and Company. On the north fork of the Platte and in the neighboring country the firms of Pratte, Cabanne and Company and Sybille and Company strove to divert a portion of the trade from the company's establishment at Fort John on the Laramie.

The American Fur Company met this formidable opposition by a shrewd move which, during the next four years, proved a great element of strength in its favor. It secured the revival of the office of Indian agent for the tribes of the Upper Missouri and the appointment of one of its own most trusted and experienced traders, Andrew Drips, as agent. It did this upon the ground of putting a stop to the liquor traffic. There can be no doubt of the sincerity of the company in this matter, although its action was based upon purely selfish motives. It had no fear of opposition in the ordinary business of the trade, but it dreaded the use of liquor by its opponents. Without this article its own power would count for nothing, even against the most worthless opponent who might be supplied with it. It was therefore of the first importance to break up the practice of smuggling, and the company for once found itself in the happy position of being able to serve its own interests by a zealous enforcement of the laws of the country.

The correspondence still in the possession of the descendants of Major Drips shows conclusively that the appointment of this able and experienced trader was due to the influence of the American Fur Company, and that they were not slow to exact a return for their services when he entered upon his new duties.[5] Never before in the history of the fur trade had any agent taken such energetic measures to enforce the law prohibiting the importation or use of liquor into the Indian country. The new agent traveled over the entire Western country, not even stopping for the cold of winter, and did everything which his limited means permitted to break up the traffic among the opposition traders. At the same time he granted the American Fur Company every possible facility for pursuing their rivals. They were authorized in express terms to establish trading posts wherever Fox, Livingston and Company, or Pratte, Cabanne and Company might establish them. While it is not likely that a man of Major Drips' high character deliberately used his official position for the benefit of his old company, there is no doubt that his administration operated strongly to that end. Mr. F. Cutting, resident agent of Fox, Livingston and Company, openly accused him of gross favoritism to the American Fur Company, and demanded his removal from office. The charges, however, were denied by Major Drips and no notice was taken of them by the Department at Washington.

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[4] This was in 1864, when the old company sold out to the Northwestern Fur Company, which was organized by J. B. Hubbell of St. Paul, Minn.

The opposition to the company on the Platte river was of considerable importance. Pratte, Cabanne and Company, who owned Fort Platte, succeeded in smuggling in some three hundred gallons of alcohol, a portion of which was brought in by a man named Richards, notorious for his character as a lawless desperado. It is supposed that he brought it from the Mexican territory. At this period the practice of smuggling liquor from Santa Fe to the headwaters of the Arkansas and Platte rivers had become a regular business and led the War Department to station a company of dragoons on the Arkansas in 1843.[6] Major Drips sent J. V. Hamilton to Fort Platte to investigate the matter, and armed him with written authority to confiscate the property of the offending company and to expel them from the country. But the shrewd traders were too quick for him. They raised the caches where the liquor was concealed within the fort and hurried it to a secure hiding place outside. When Hamilton arrived he could only find the fresh evidences of the empty caches, and rumors of the recent presence of liquor there, but of positive proof he could find none.

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[5] "Heretofore *we traders* have never thought the government in earnest when they spoke about liquor. I hope that you will teach us now that such is no longer the case." J. F. A. Sanford, Agent of the American Fur Company, to Drips, July 10, 1843.

The Fort Platte traders carried on a feeble opposition to the American Fur Company for a number of years, but could make no permanent impression upon the country and finally succumbed to their powerful rival.

The firm of Fox, Livingston and Company, also called the Union Fur Company, and frequently Ebbetts and Cutting from the names of the resident agents, was the most powerful opposition with which the Upper Missouri Outfit ever had to deal excepting only that of Sublette and Campbell ten years before. The rise of this company is thus sketched by Charles Larpenteur in his *Forty Years a Fur Trader*. The partner, Ebbetts, went up the river in 1841 with a small equipment to trade upon his own account. The

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[6] "I would particularly call the attention of the Department to a description of traders who reside in the vicinity of the Mexican country on the waters of the Arkansas. They cultivate corn, etc., which they trade to the Indians for robes and skins with which they proceed to Santa Fe and Taos and barter for whiskey, flour, etc. These latter articles they again bring to the Indians with whom they trade in opposition to, and much to the detriment of, the regular licensed traders. They defy a United States agent, and want of a proper force at the latter's command permits them to act with impunity. They reside in two villages, one on the American, and the other within the Mexican, line. They are a mongrel crew of Americans, French, Mexicans, and half-breeds, and, generally speaking, are unable to procure employment on account of past misconduct. In fact, they are no better than outlaws." Drips to Thomas H. Harvey, Superintendent Indian Affairs, St. Louis. Dated at Fort Pierre, April 11, 1845.

American Fur Company did not pay much attention to him and he made an exceedingly profitable trade. Upon the strength of this he went to New York and approached the firm of Fox, Livingston and Company with a view of enlisting them in the business. The evidence of his own success was convincing, and his statement that the American Fur Company was in a bad way and losing its hold upon the country was believed. A new firm was organized for this trade, under the style of the Union Fur Company, and one of its members, a Mr. Kelsey, was deputed to reside in the Indian country and co-operate with the agents, Ebbetts and Cutting, in the management of the business. The license granted the new company enumerated a great number of points throughout the Indian country where they might establish posts; but their principal establishments were fixed at the mouth of the Yellowstone, where old Fort William was re-occupied and called Fort Mortimer, and in the Sioux country twenty miles below Fort Pierre, where the post of Fort George was built.

Promptly with the opening of the season of 1842 the Union Fur Company went up the river with the steamboat *New Haven* laden with a full and complete outfit and proceeded to establish trading posts everywhere in opposition to the American Fur Company. But Mr. Kelsey soon found, as he entered the Indian country, that Mr. Ebbetts' roseate view of the prospects of trade in that region was absurdly overdrawn. It became more and more evident that his company had been grossly deceived and that their enterprise was destined to be a losing one. But they had now gone too far to withdraw, and putting the best face on their dubious prospect, they entered upon their work with every possible proof of a determination to succeed. They exhibited from the start a facility for evading the law and resorting to desperate measures, which was never surpassed even by the American Fur Company itself; and in spite of all that Major Drips could do they succeeded in smuggling quantities of liquor to nearly all of their posts.

Fort George in the Sioux country was their first and principal establishment, and hither Mr. Kelsey retired after a trip on the boat to the mouth of the Yellowstone. Mr. Kelsey found himself in the hands of a most desperate set of outlaws who were ready to go to any length of rascality that opportunity or inclination might suggest. Kelsey made effective use of them for awhile in opposing his rivals. When the trader William P. May came down the river in 1843 with a boat load of furs, Kelsey's men fired upon the boat, compelled him to land, and then confiscated his cargo. As soon as Fort George was established the American Fur Company sent a trader named Bouis down from Fort Pierre to set up a lodge with an assortment of goods to oppose the new company. He had not been there very long before the employes at Fort George, who seemed to be drunk most of the time, made a raid upon him and cut his lodge all to pieces. He was relieved by J. V. Hamilton, who promptly reported to Fort Pierre that the situation at Fort George was such that his life was in continual danger.

In fact Kelsey soon found that he could not himself control the desperate band whom he was using against his opponents. Some of them had established themselves on Simeneau's Island opposite Fort George and near the east shore. Here they took possession of an old cabin and bade defiance to Mr. Kelsey. This gentleman, who seems to have been a man of nerve and spirit, ordered them to leave the island, and upon their refusal to do so armed himself and proceeded to see that his orders were carried out. Two of the men he shot dead on the spot and severely wounded two others. Dreading the consequences of this desperate performance he is said to have left the post the following night and to have fled to Mexico. Major Drips secured several affidavits from persons acquainted with the affair and these are now presumably on file in the Department at Washington.

Mr. Cutting, who was left in charge at Fort Mortimer, was confident of his ability to cope with the American Fur

Company; but a little incident that happened soon afterward went far to dispel that illusion. As was the custom when a new opposition came up the river, the Indians paid it some attention. A powerful Assiniboine chief called on Mr. Cutting, from whom he received a brilliant uniform as a present. From his general demeanor Cutting felt sure that he had secured the custom of the chief and his band. When the chief left he went straight to Fort Union, sat down in the private room of Mr. Culbertson, who was then in charge, and after a few moments' silence said: "I suppose you think I have left our big house [Fort Union]. No; I am not a child. I went below to see the chief, who treated me well. I did not ask him for anything. I did not refuse his presents. But these can not make me abandon this house, where are buried the remains of our fathers, whose tracks are yet fresh in all the paths leading to this house. No, I will not abandon this house!" Cutting was completely undone when he heard this news, and concluded that the American Fur Company was not, after all, in so bad a way as his associate Ebbetts had represented.

The Union Fur Company continued to do a losing business for about three years, their affairs constantly going from bad to worse. Their better class of employes, feeling that they were on a sinking ship, withdrew from their employ, leaving them only the most abandoned and reckless characters in the country. Finally, in the spring of 1845, they sold out to the American Fur Company, thus closing the career of the last of the opposition companies which we shall have occasion to notice.[7]

In the summer of 1833, the year following the establishment of Fort McKenzie, an important incident occurred at that post. Notwithstanding the inviolable peace which the

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[7] "The Union Fur Company has sold their entire stock in the country to P. Chouteau, Jr., & Company. I am sorry to inform you that they leave in the country upwards of fifty men—a mongrel set of half-breeds and white men, the greater part notorious for their misconduct here as well as in the civilized world." Drips to Thomas H. Harvey, Superintendent Indian Affairs. Dated Fort Pierre, May 18, 1845.

Assiniboines had promised McKenzie should thenceforth subsist between them and the Blackfeet, those Indians from some cause or other grew tired of the compact and proceeded to treat it as of no effect. On the morning of August 28th, 1833, they made a bold attack upon a party of Blackfeet who were encamped around the fort. Quite a number of Indians were killed at the first onslaught, but the Blackfeet were quickly admitted into the fort from which a counter attack was vigorously returned. The battle continued in a desultory fashion all day and ended in the discomfiture of the Assiniboines. Prince Maximilian was in the post at the time, and has left a vivid picture from his pen, as his artist, Bodmer, did from his pencil, of this exciting affair.[8]

No other event of unusual interest transpired at this remote outpost until 1842. F. A. Chardon, an able but unscrupulous man, and something of a desperate character when his evil nature was once aroused, was in charge. It happened that in the winter of 1842-3 a negro belonging to Chardon, to whom he was greatly attached, was killed by the Blood Indians. Chardon vowed vengeance and found a ready coadjutor in Alexander Harvey, one of the most abandoned desperadoes known to the fur trade. A general massacre was planned but it only partially succeeded.[9] Enough was done, however, to embitter the Indians so that the further usefulness of Fort McKenzie was at an end. Chardon accordingly abandoned the post in the summer of 1843 and built another farther down, at the mouth of the Judith, and called it Fort Chardon. The Indians promptly burned the old post. Strange to say the name of the old post lapsed entirely so far as popular usage was concerned, and it came to be known only as Fort Brulé and its site as Brulé Bottom.

The year 1843, with which our present studies terminate, found the American Fur Company occupying all the ground that it had ever won, but still having to fight, as it always had done, for its existence. Just at this time the prospects of the Upper Missouri Outfit were particularly gloomy. Fox, Livingston and Company were at the best of their career and were causing the company no little anxiety. Bridger had made almost a total failure of his latest mountain expeditions and had practically announced the death knell of the mountain trade by building a post in the heart of the old fur country for the *convenience of emigrants.* The company was still to survive for a score of years, but it required no prophet to see that the sun of its prosperity, so far as the fur trade was concerned, was on the decline.

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[8] See Part IV., Chapter IV.

[9] See notice of Harvey, Part IV., Chapter VII.

CHAPTER XXIII.

THE AMERICAN FUR COMPANY.

METHODS AND MEN.

Financial Stability of the American Fur Company — Conservative management — Business arrangements — Opposition companies — Measures of policy — Able men in the American Fur Company — Ramsay Crooks — Pierre Chouteau, Jr. — Kenneth McKenzie — William Laidlaw — Alexander Culbertson — David D. Mitchell — James Archdale Hamilton — James Kipp — Daniel Lamont — The Sarpy family — Lucien Fontenelle — William Henry Vanderburgh — Jacob Halsey — Joseph A. Sire — Charles Larpenteur — Warren Angus Ferris.

IN the general discussion upon the business methods of the fur trade much has already been said that applies to the American Fur Company. Only those special features which distinguish it from other trading concerns need therefore be noticed here.

The chief elements of strength which made the American Fur Company such a power in the Indian country were the great wealth and business sagacity of its founder. Its formidable financial backing gave to its operations a degree of force and stability which none of the other American fur companies possessed. Reverses which would have ruined an ordinary concern scarcely caused a ripple on the current of its affairs. If competing traders stood in the way, and could not be crushed by opposition, the exhaustless reservoir of Mr. Astor's pocket-book could buy them out. The onward march of the company was therefore that of resistless power and even the great opposition of the St. Louis traders was finally forced to give way.

The operations of the company, moreover, were always conducted with caution and sound judgment. Its career was marked by few brilliant strokes of policy, but rather by a conservative and continuous advance so fortified and supported that each step was permanent progress. It permitted other and more adventurous concerns to break the ground in new and dangerous territory rather than run the risk of invading those untried fields.[1] Thus every point of its territory on the upper river had previously been occupied by the Missouri or Columbia Fur Companies or by General Ashley. This was not perhaps much to the credit of its courage, but greatly to the advantage of its business. The American Fur Company never met with anything like the brilliant success of General Ashley, but if its particular gains were not great, they were many and continuous, and the aggregate was always large.

The goods for the trade were generally imported or purchased in New York under the immediate direction of the home office. Those going to the Northern Department were sent to Lake Erie and shipped from Black Rock to posts on the lakes and the upper Mississippi. Those bound for the Western Department were generally sent by way of New Orleans, particularly after the advent of steamboats. Shipments were also often made by way of Pittsburg, and occasionally by way of the lakes.

St. Louis was the headquarters of the Western Department, as Michilimackinac was of the Northern. It was the outfitting point for the entire country to the westward, and for the posts on the Mississippi as far up as Prairie du Chien. The lower Missouri posts were supplied by independent outfits, but the entire river above the present location of Sioux City was included in a single equipment, called the Upper Missouri Outfit.

The goods, in their long journey from Europe to the interior of this continent, passed through three distinct agencies before their final destination was reached. They were generally furnished by Mr. Astor at a fixed advance upon cost and charges. They then went through the house at St. Louis, where the various outfits for each year were made up. Here there was a second regular advance. To this point the profits were fixed and certain, and the chances of loss very small. It was not until the traders at the company houses in the interior were reached that the struggle of the business began. The trader's profits were largely dependent upon his own efforts. He ran the risks of loss from hostile Indians, competing traders, and the many other difficulties that beset his business. On the whole the trade arrangements of the American Fur Company were grossly one-sided and unfair. They threw the risks of loss upon those who had the burden of the work to perform. Thus the heavy damages of nearly ten thousand dollars which the affair of Cabanne and Leclerc cost the company, were charged to the "U. M. O.," although the house in St. Louis was in the fullest sense a party to the transaction. It is not a pleasing reflection that the profits of this extensive business found their way into a few hands while those who bore its hardships and dangers beyond the frontiers of civilization and the comforts and luxuries thereof, generally ended their careers in comparative poverty if not in actual want.[2]

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[1] To this general rule the enterprise of the Pacific Fur Company was a notable exception, as was also the establishment of Fort Piegan among the Blackfeet.

In the multitudinous details of a business like that of the American Fur Company, covering half the area of the United States, it is not surprising that it should appear in different lights from different points of view. One may search in vain in the correspondence of Astor or Crooks for any evidence of irregular methods. The conduct of affairs at the home office, however vigorous and aggressive it might be, was always strictly within the law. Very different was it at the other end of the line, where the business came in contact with the lawless element of the wilderness. Thus, while McKenzie was making preparations to establish a distillery at Fort Union whereby he would be able to evade the Federal statutes, Crooks was writing to Chouteau strongly deprecating his course, and urging the agents of the company to stand upon higher ground. "It is enough," he said, "that our laws prohibit the introduction of ardent spirits into the Indian country, and it is our bounden duty to conform honestly thereto." The St. Louis house had a more difficult rôle to fill, for it was midway between New York and the wilderness — between the law-abiding management of the company's affairs and the law-defying agents at the distant posts. One does not need to scan very closely the correspondence of the Western Department at St. Louis to see that it had one code of business when looking toward the east and quite a different one when looking in the other direction.

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[2] "Meek was evidently very poor. He had scarcely clothing enough to cover his body. And while talking with us the frosty winds which sucked up the valley made him shiver like an aspen leaf. He reverted to his destitute situation and complained of the injustice of his former employers; the little remuneration he had received for the toils and dangers he had endured on their account, etc.; a complaint which I had heard from every trapper whom I had met on my journey." *Travels in the Great Western Prairies,* T. J. Farnham, 1839, p. 69. This is a fair sample of the complaints which came from nearly all the old employes of the company.

Owing to the great power of the American Fur Company it was opposed by all other traders. It had no allies. An "opposition company" was one opposed to the American Fur Company. However much the smaller traders might fight among themselves, there was one enemy against whom they made common cause — one flag under which all could rally. The opposition to the company was, it is true, more numerous than formidable, and considering their uniform experience of failure, the number of competitors is at first thought surprising. A great part of the opposition to the company was a species of blackmail. It was a common thing for employes who had been trained in its service until they had acquired some knowledge of the fur trade, to quit their employment and set up for themselves. Sometimes they did this from personal spite, because they had a grievance against the company, and at others because they actually felt that they might meet with some success. Occasionally the more experienced would enlist eastern capital in their enterprises and would themselves ascend the river as agent or principal in the business. As a general thing, however, these smaller concerns, like minor political parties, had no real expectation of accomplishing anything by themselves, but hoped, by embarrassing their powerful competitor, to force it to buy them out or to make profitable concessions to them. To this end they would ascend the river and settle down near some important outpost of the company and ply their skill to the utmost to debauch the Indians and secure their trade. Not having any character to defend they were reckless of measures. They could easily smuggle through the small quantities of liquor they wanted, and were often better equipped at particular points with this decisive weapon of trade than were their opponents. These irresponsible traders were in fact an unmitigated nuisance in the Indian trade. They were not powerful enough to stand the least chance of crippling their adversary, any more than summer flies can cripple the horse which they annoy, but they could and did succeed in causing it infinite embarrassment, and its whole career was one prolonged effort to exterminate the myriad pests that were always swarming about it.

Notwithstanding the discreditable motives which lay behind most of these adventurers the sympathy of the public was always with them. The great company was looked upon as an oppressive monopoly, resolved to crush whatever lay in its way, and its acts were judged by a stricter standard than were those of its less powerful rivals. The government inspectors were as a rule more severe with it, perhaps from sympathy with the smaller traders, but probably because they could more easily detect its shortcomings.

The attitude of the company toward these competitors was always severe and merciless, for, knowing their character and motives, it held them in the utmost contempt. As a general thing it fought them with their own methods until it had won all the trade away from them, when they would find themselves stranded and helpless and would sue for mercy. Others of the more respectable class it would buy out, receiving them again into the service. With still others who were really powerful rivals, like the Columbia Fur Company, it formed coalitions on advantageous terms to the company absorbed. In one way or another it held the field against all competitors and only retired at last when its work was done and a new order of things had come over the field of its extensive operations.[3]

For the rest, the company's affairs were conducted on the same principles which control in the business world today. It knew perfectly well the power of political influence, and no railroad corporation of modern times is more assiduous in the lobby than was the American Fur Company in the Departments at Washington. More than once it escaped exclusion from the Indian country where a more obscure party would have had no show whatever. The company also understood to perfection the value of favors to those who were in a position to help or injure it. Free passes were provided on its steamboats; scientific enterprises were generously promoted, and every thing was done that would redound to its praise or credit. It may indeed be said that the history of the company upon the upper Missouri was uniformly on the side of the advancement of knowledge and its assistance to enterprises of this character was of permanent value. But to the average individual the American Fur Company was the personification of monopoly, determined to rule or ruin, and hence it was thoroughly hated even by those who respected its power.[4]

[3] It was with reference to these competing traders that Chouteau on one occasion issued the following instructions to John P. Cabanne at Council Bluffs: "*Si vous ne croyez pouvoir vous débarasser d'eux par la force des armes, il vaut mieux faire un arrangement en leur donant tel poste que vous jugez le plus convenable à nos intérêts.*" And the faithful lieutenant returned the following comfortable assurance to his chief: "*Sois sans inquiétude. Rien ne sera négligé pour faire mordre la poussière à notre incapable adversaire, et tout ce qui dépendra de moi sera mis en usage pour y parvenir.*"

[4] The following testimonial by an Indian agent, uttered at about the

It is scarcely necessary to observe that a business concern of the magnitude and importance of the American Fur Company must needs have had many men of high ability connected with it. Astor, the founder of the company, whose biography has been given in another place, stands at the front rank of commercial geniuses of this or any other age. The Chouteaus of St. Louis were considered in their day among the ablest business men of the country, and there is no other name so intimately connected with the growth and development of the metropolis of the Mississippi valley. Ramsay Crooks, Robert Stuart, Kenneth McKenzie, Alexander Culbertson, D. D. Mitchell, and many others were men who were charged with high responsibilities, and would today stand near the top in the world of business.

The strongest man, next to Mr. Astor himself, who at any time stood at the helm, in the home office at New York, was RAMSAY CROOKS, who rose to the presidency of the company. He was born in Greenock, Scotland, January 2nd, 1787. He came to America at the age of sixteen, and at once entered the service of the Montreal fur traders. He went to Mackinaw as clerk to Robert Dickson, and the next year pushed his way on to St. Louis, where he entered the trade of the Missouri. As early as 1807 he became associated with Robert McLellan, with whom he continued in business until the two entered the Pacific Fur Company in 1811. After Crooks' return from the Pacific in 1813, he drops out of sight for the next few years, but he was evidently associated in some capacity with Mr. Astor. In 1817 he appears as agent of the American Fur Company, which had just bought out the Southwest Company. During this period he displayed the most extraordinary energy in his work, and for many years made the long and arduous annual journey

time that the American Fur Company was permanently retiring from business, shows that it had not risen in popular estimation: "This old American Fur Company is the most corrupt institution ever tolerated in our country. They have involved the government in their speculations and schemes; they have enslaved the Indians; kept them in ignorance; taken from them year after year their pitiful earnings, etc."

to Mackinaw and even to St. Louis. Crooks was the virtual head of the company's business during the twelve years after the Western Department was established in St. Louis. When Mr. Astor sold out his interest in the company in 1834, Crooks purchased the Northern Department, which then took the company name, and soon after became its president. Crooks lived to the age of seventy-two and died in New York June 6, 1859. He became related through marriage to the Chouteau family, having married Emily Pratt, March 1, 1825.

Crooks was the letter writer of the American Fur Company; not merely because his correspondence was voluminous, but because in character and quality it was far above that of the average trader. It was strong and vigorous, like the nature of the man behind it. It abounded in interesting matter, of great value historically, and his letters constitute our best fund of information on many points connected with these early events. Some of these letters are unsurpassed as examples of clear and incisive writing.

Crooks was always open and above board in his dealings, yet a vigorous and relentless enemy when he took up a contest. He opposed clandestine, quite as much as open, violations of the law. In all his career connected with a business where the temptation to use lawless methods was so great, there is no record of any attempt on his part to do anything that he had not a legal right to do.

Although a man of great energy and longevity he was not a strong man physically. The record of his work shows that he was in ill health a great deal of the time, and it is a matter of surprise that so much of an invalid could accomplish such a quantity of work.

The principal character in the Western Department of the American Fur Company was **Pierre Chouteau, Jr.**, of St. Louis, grandson of Auguste Chouteau, one of the founders of the city, and himself the most illustrious scion of the distinguished Chouteau family. He was born in St. Louis, January 19, 1789, and by his own people was known as

Pierre Cadet Chouteau. He was bred in the atmosphere of the fur trade, and early showed a marked aptitude for business, becoming clerk to his father before he had reached the age of sixteen. In 1806 he accompanied Julien Du Buque to the lead mines of the upper Mississippi, and in 1809 went with his father up the Missouri in the service of the Missouri Fur Company. Soon after reaching his majority he went into business on his own account, and in 1813 formed a partnership with B. Berthold, which continued until 1831. He was a member of the firm of Bernard Pratte and Company, which secured the agency of the Western Department of the American Fur Company; and a leading member of the firm of Pratte, Chouteau and Company, which purchased the Western Department in 1834. Four years later the firm name was changed to Pierre Chouteau, Jr., and Company, which remained the name for more than twenty years.

As his business expanded, Chouteau was drawn into other fields, and for many years resided mainly in New York, where he was interested in railroads and other industrial enterprises. He was at this time one of the leading financiers in that home of financial men.

Chouteau died in St. Louis, October 6, 1865.

One has only to read the correspondence of Pierre Chouteau, Jr., to understand that he was a man of more than ordinary business ability. A born merchant, he possessed to a marked degree the rare quality of turning to pecuniary profit whatever he touched. These natural abilities he supplemented by the most industrious and persevering methods. In a business which stretched over a million square miles he carried out the details with the greatest exactness and understood the needs of the most remote posts as if he had been there. He personally made two extensive steamboat trips to the upper river and thus further familiarized himself with the wants of the trade. His solicitude extended to the minutest particulars. It is said that whenever the company's annual boat was about to leave port for the upper river he always visited the Captain on the boat, went over everything in detail, cautioned him about trusting to the Indians, and enjoined him under no circumstances to take unnecessary risks.

Chouteau, like every successful man, adapted his methods to conditions as he found them. He made no attempt to introduce a higher standard of business morality in the trade than it was accustomed to. He stood solidly behind his agents on the upper river in the questionable measures which the exigencies of competition frequently obliged them to resort to. In short his code of business morals was sufficiently elastic to fit the situation with which he had to deal.

Strict and severe in the discipline of his business, he was nevertheless generous and fair to all who served him well. His most trusted steamboat masters he would permit, without loss of salary, to take service with other boats after their return from the annual trip until the company again required their services: but let one of them have the temerity to set up in trade for himself where the company was doing business and the whole enginery of that leviathan concern would be used to crush him.

Chouteau was liberal toward scientific expeditions seeking to go up the country, and he contributed in no small degree to their success. His house was always open to people of this class. He took a deep personal interest in their researches, and himself gathered an extensive collection of Indian curios.

In the course of his long business career an immense mass of correspondence had accumulated, and although this was long before the era of typewriters, and to some extent before that of the common letter press, copies of everything were laboriously preserved even where they had to be transcribed by hand. All the letters received were carefully briefed and bound together in neat packages, in which form they have come down to the present time, and constitute our most valuable original data upon the history of the American fur trade.

King of the " U. M. O." in its palmy days was KENNETH

McKenzie, the ablest trader that the American Fur Company ever possessed. He was born of distinguished parentage in Rosshire, Inverness, Scotland, in 1801. He was a relative of Alexander Mackenzie, who made the first journey across the continent ever made by white men north of the Spanish possessions. Kenneth came to America early in life and entered the service of the British Fur Companies. Almost nothing is known of him during this period, but it is probable that he lost his position as did so many others when the two British companies consolidated in 1821. He joined Joseph Renville in forming the Columbia Fur Company, of which he was President at the time of its union with the American Fur Company in 1827. McKenzie was placed in control of the American Fur Company's interests upon the upper Missouri and with Laidlaw and Lamont formed the sub-department called the Upper Missouri Outfit. To McKenzie fell the responsible task of carrying the trade into those hostile regions from which the traders had always hitherto been driven. He was very ambitious and entered this new field with great enthusiasm and untiring energy. Within four years he had occupied the entire theatre of trade with posts at the mouth of the Yellowstone, the Bighorn, and the Marias. The noted post of Fort Union at the mouth of the Yellowstone, the best built and the most commodiously-equipped post west of the Mississippi, was McKenzie's creation. He was successful in his work, but allowed his zeal to lead him into a *faux pas* which ended his usefulness in the upper country. This was the erection of a distillery at Fort Union for the purpose of evading the laws of the United States. The detection of this subterfuge brought wide-spread odium upon the company, seriously threatened its charter, and forced McKenzie to retire for a time from the country. He visited Europe, and after his return went again to Fort Union, but did not long remain there. He closed up his affairs with the American Fur Company with about fifty thousand dollars to his credit. He then established himself in the wholesale liquor trade, but was not successful, and with his habits of lavish hospitality soon spent the greater part of his fortune. He died in St. Louis April 26, 1861.

McKenzie was eminently fitted for the particular calling which fortune assigned him. Of distinguished birth, he always carried himself as one born to command. His discipline was severe, and he had little regard for human life when it stood in his way. He once offered to surrender to the merciless savages a man who had killed one of their number. At another time, when news came of an Indian attack upon a party of hunters, he was heard to inquire if the horses had been saved. On hearing that they had all been lost and that only the men had escaped, he exclaimed: "D—n the men! If the horses had been saved it would have amounted to something!" No one about Fort Union ever doubted his ability; no one but dreaded his authority. He affected a kind of state[5] in his business, generally wearing a uniform, and permitting only a select few at his table. Toward his guests he was lavishly hospitable, and in him as an entertainer the best traditions of British Fur Companies found expression. He was fond of manly sports, and his particular delight was to engage in buffalo hunts with the fine horses which he kept especially trained for the purpose. He took much interest in the country around him, and made an extensive collection of specimens and curios illustrating its remarkable features.

From his headquarters at Fort Union, McKenzie ruled over an extent of country greater than that of many a notable empire in history. His outposts were hundreds of miles away. His parties of trappers roamed far and wide through the fastnesses of the mountains. From every direction tribes of roving Indians came to his post to trade. Alto-

[5] "Imagine my surprise, on entering Mr. Campbell's room, to find myself in the presence of Mr. McKenzie, who was at that time considered the king of the Missouri; and, from the style in which he was dressed, I really thought he was a king." Larpenteur's first acquaintance with McKenzie. *Forty Years a Fur Trader*, p. 65.

gether it was a remarkable business that he followed, and one which only a man of great ability could have handled so successfully. He was universally feared and respected even by the turbulent spirits of the mountains, while his immediate subordinates in charge of the various posts considered him not merely their superior but a friend. His correspondence with them shows diplomatic skill of no mean order, and he could with equal facility praise well doing, administer mild censure in a way to rob it of all bitterness, or bear down with merciless weight upon him who deserved it.

McKenzie had a fair education and the extensive correspondence which has come down to us is extremely well written. It discloses an active mind which looked beyond the mere details of trade and took an intelligent interest in the affairs of the world.

McKenzie married late in life and left two children, daughters, who are still (1900) living. He also had a son by an Indian wife. The name of this son was Owen McKenzie. He was given a good education and became a man of considerable prominence in the upper Missouri trade. He was killed by Malcolm Clark in 1863.

William Laidlaw, next to Kenneth McKenzie, was the ablest of the traders who came to the Missouri with the Columbia Fur Company. To him was assigned Fort Tecumseh, which later became Fort Pierre, the largest and most important post except Fort Union. He was of Scotch descent, trained in the service of the British Fur Companies, and thoroughly versed in the business of the fur trade. He was a severe master, and his tyrannical temper often made him unpopular. A great lover of hunting he spent much time in the buffalo chase. Like McKenzie he was a good letter writer and evidently was considered a valuable man. He was well off when he retired from the business. He built a house near Liberty, Missouri, where he kept open door to his friends as long as his money lasted. He died a poor man.

Alexander Culbertson, who ranked with McKenzie and Laidlaw in the Missouri fur trade, had not risen to prominence until about the close of the period which this sketch embraces. He was of Scotch-Irish parentage and was born in Chambersburg, Pennsylvania, in May, 1809. He lived with his parents on their farm until 1826 when he accompanied his uncle, John Culbertson, to Florida, and was there during the Indian War. He entered the American Fur Company service in 1829. He rose steadily and became the company's most important man when McKenzie and Laidlaw retired. For a long while he was at the head of Fort Union and for a time also of Fort John on the Laramie. He built Fort Alexander on the Yellowstone near the mouth of the Bighorn.

Culbertson was a popular trader and lacked the arbitrary manner characteristic of McKenzie and Laidlaw. He was about six feet high, of strong presence, a keen eye and a frank and open countenance. He married a woman of the Blackfoot nation who became well known in the history of the upper Missouri. She died only a few years ago. Their children were all well educated and became responsible business men and women. Culbertson died August 27, 1879, at Orleans, Missouri. He was well off financially when he retired from the fur trade.

David D. Mitchell (born in Louisa County, Va., July 31, 1806; died in St. Louis, Mo., May 31, 1861,) had a long and honorable career in the fur trade, first as a clerk and then as a partner in the Upper Missouri Outfit. He was the builder of Fort McKenzie in 1832. He became United States Superintendent of Indian Affairs, Central Division, with headquarters at St. Louis, September 20, 1841, and held the position at intervals until 1852. He entered the volunteer service during the war with Mexico and was Lieutenant-Colonel of a Missouri regiment raised by Sterling Price. He served with Col. Doniphan during the war, and commanded the detachment that captured Chihuahua.

Honore Picotte came to the Missouri with the Columbia

Fur Company, but after its union with the American Fur Company he joined with others in forming the French Fur Company, which in turn sold out to the American Fur Company in 1830. Picotte then entered the service of the Upper Missouri Outfit where he remained for some twenty years. He became a partner and finally rose to an influential standing in the company's affairs. His name constantly appears in the correspondence of the times, but his history, except in the immediate connection of the fur trade, is obscure.

James Archdale Hamilton, who served for a long time at Fort Union, and had charge of that post during McKenzie's absence from July 26, 1834, to November 17, 1835, was an able man over whose personality an air of mystery hung which time has not cleared up. He is said to have been an English nobleman by the name of Archibald Palmer[6] who through some difficulty had been obliged to leave his native land. He came to America under an assumed name and in some way or other became acquainted with Kenneth McKenzie who took him to Fort Union as bookkeeper. He was well educated and proved himself very useful, as may be inferred from the fact that he was placed in charge of the post during the absence of McKenzie. His correspondence during this time shows him to have been thoroughly conversant with the duties of the post. His name is of frequent occurrence in the literature and correspondence of the period. In the midst of the rough life of the wilderness he held himself aloof from its vices, was reticent in his manner, extremely punctilious in his dress which he obtained from London, and always hated the Indians. He was hospitable and companionable in spite of his eccentric and exclusive ways. He is said to have died at St. Louis in the service of the American Fur Company.

James Kipp was a well-known character in the early fur trade and came to the Missouri with the Columbia Fur Company in 1822. He was in a sense the founder of Fort Clark in that he established a post in that vicinity from which Fort

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[6] Larpenteur, in *Forty Years a Fur Trader*, p. 84.

Clark evolved in the course of a few years. In 1831 Kipp went to the Marias and built Fort Piegan, the first post in the Blackfoot territory. In 1833-34 he was in charge of Fort Clark. Very little is known of his life except that he had a long and varied career in the Missouri fur trade.

Daniel Lamont was one of the three partners of the "U. M. O." and one of the original Columbia Fur Company men. He had a long career in the fur trade, but very little is known of his life. He is supposed to belong to the Scottish family of Lamont who originated in Argyleshire, Scotland, and whose clan history is known back to the year 1200. Daniel was the most common name in the family. One of the Lamonts, also named Daniel, settled in New York State in 1818. He was grandfather of the Hon. Daniel S. Lamont, Secretary of War under President Cleveland. Another branch of the family migrated to Canada at an early date, and it is supposed that the Missouri trader belonged to this branch.

The **Sarpy** family was long connected with the St. Louis fur trade. John B. was born January 12, 1798, and died April 1, 1857. His father, Gregoire Berald Sarpy, is said to have been the first man to attempt the navigation of the Missouri with keelboats. Sarpy commenced his career as a clerk to some of the St. Louis traders and rose to a partnership in the American Fur Company, in whose affairs he bore a part second only to that of Chouteau. Two posts were named after him—*John*, on the Laramie, and *Sarpy*, on the Yellowstone.

Thomas L. Sarpy, a brother of John B., was a clerk in the service of the American Fur Company when he met a tragic death, January 19, 1832, at the post of the Ogalallah Indians. On the evening of that day after a busy day's work at trading, he was putting away the robes which had been taken in. An assistant was handing them over a counter on which a lighted candle sat. A spark from the candle, it is supposed, was blown by the gusts caused in handling the robes, into a fifty-pound keg of powder which sat uncovered just behind the counter. In the explosion that followed, the building was completely demolished and Sarpy was instantly killed, his body being mutilated beyond all recognition. The other two men in the room were not seriously injured and the property was nearly all recovered.

Peter A. Sarpy was a clerk of the American Fur Company for several years in charge of the post near Bellevue.

Lucien Fontenelle was one of the best examples of the Rocky mountain "partisan," the leader of a "brigade," or itinerant party of hunters and trappers. There was, moreover, an element of romance in his life which has no parallel in the history of the fur trade. It is said that he was of royal lineage. His father and mother, François and Mareonise, came from Marseilles, France, to New Orleans, where Lucien and a sister, Amelia, were born, about 1807. The parents, some years afterwards, lost their lives in a flood caused by a hurricane, but the children, being away at school, escaped. At about the age of fifteen Lucien engaged as clerk in a banking house, but, becoming incensed at an act of harsh treatment by his aunt with whom he lived, he ran away and was not seen again for twenty years. In the meanwhile he went to St. Louis, engaged in the fur trade, and at length became a leader of the mountain expeditions of the American Fur Company. At this time he was a partner of Andrew Drips, with whom he built a post at Bellevue, a few miles below the present city of Omaha. In 1835 Fontenelle went into partnership with Fitzpatrick, Sublette and Bridger, and it is said that in the following year he committed suicide at Fort Laramie.

After Fontenelle's sister Amelia had grown up she married wealth and position and led a life of high social distinction in New Orleans. Her brother, whom she supposed dead, was only a memory. One day there called at her house a man of rough appearance, dark, browned and swarthy with years of wilderness life, in whose face there was not now left a trace of its former lineaments. His sister refused to receive him. His old nurse who still lived was called in and identified him by a flesh mark on his foot. But the aristocratic sister did not take kindly to her unpolished, long-lost brother and he soon went back to Bellevue.

Fontenelle was married by Father De Smet to an Omaha woman. He had four children who lived to adult years and some of them achieved prominence in the history of the state of Nebraska.

ANDREW DRIPS was another of the famous trio of mountaineers — Fontenelle, Drips, and Vanderburgh — and, although older than either of his associates, survived them both many years. Comparatively little is known of his biography. He was born in Westmoreland County, Pa., in 1789, and died in Kansas City, Mo., September 1, 1860. Our first notice of him is in 1820 when he was associated with a fur trader by the name of Perkins. He was later a member of the Missouri Fur Company with Pilcher. Soon after the American Fur Company entered the mountain trade, Drips became associated with Vanderburgh in charge of the mountain expeditions. He continued in this business for many years. In 1842 he was appointed by President Tyler, agent for the tribes of the upper Missouri and held the office for four years. He was an active and efficient agent. After the expiration of this duty he returned to the employment of the American Fur Company.

Drips' principal establishment, while in the mountain trade, was at Bellevue a little above the mouth of the Platte and here he married a woman of the Oto nation. By her he had several children. His fourth child, a daughter, was born in Pierre's Hole on the day of the famous battle there with the Grosventre Indians, July 18, 1832. She is still living [7] and possesses the papers of her distinguished father. These are preserved in a small fur-covered trunk which Major Drips carried with him on his expeditions. They form a very complete history of the events on the Missouri during the period when Major Drips was Indian Agent.

WILLIAM HENRY VANDERBURGH, clerk and partisan of the American Fur Company, was a chivalrous and daring leader. He was born in Vincennes, Ind., probably about 1798, although there is authority for fixing the date at 1792. He was the son of Henry Vanderburgh who did service in the Revolutionary War as captain in the Fifth New York Regiment, and was subsequently appointed by President Adams, Judge of the Indiana territory. Young Vanderburgh was educated at West Point, having entered that institution in 1817. He could not long have remained in the government service, for as early as 1823 he had achieved distinction as a trader and was associated with Joshua Pilcher in the Missouri Fur Company. He was present at the battle with the Aricara Indians in August of that year and held the nominal rank of Captain by appointment of Colonel Leavenworth. After leaving the service of the Missouri Fur Company he entered that of the American Fur Company as a partisan in charge of the mountain expeditions. The events of his career in the mountains, so far as known, are related in the regular course of our narrative, while the circumstances of his tragic death form the subject of a separate chapter.[8]

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[7] Mrs. William Mulkey of Kansas City, Mo.

JACOB HALSEY, clerk and partner in the "U. M. O.," served mainly at Forts Pierre and Union. He kept the journal at Pierre and on one occasion varied its monotony by introducing an interesting dissertation upon the Mandan and Aricara Indians. He was a valuable man, but given to hard drink, which eventually ruined his constitution. In 1837 he had the smallpox at Fort Union. Late in the summer of 1842, while on a visit at Laidlaw's home, near Liberty, Missouri, he became intoxicated and in this condition rode on horseback at a rapid gait along a road through some woods. His head struck one of the trees and he was instantly killed.

JOSEPH A. SIRE was prominently identified with the transportation business of the American Fur Company on the early steamboats. For many years he was master of the annual boat, and one of the most interesting documents of those times which still survive, is a log book in which he kept a record of his trips. It was kept in French and is a precious relic of a phase of Western life now gone forever. Later he became admitted to an interest in the company. Sire was born at La Rochelle, France, February 19, 1799; came to America at the age of fifteen; established himself in Philadelphia until 1836 when he went to St. Louis where he remained the rest of his life. He died July 15, 1854.

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[8] See Part IV., Chapter III. The data for this sketch were furnished in part by Mrs. Francis N. Davis, of Sioux City, Iowa, who is a descendant of the Vanderburgh family.

Charles Larpenteur was an engagé and clerk of the American Fur Company and otherwise employed in the country along the Missouri for more than thirty years. His importance in the present connection is rather that of historian than trader. In the latter vocation he was a failure, but he followed the practice of keeping a daily journal which he later worked over into an autobiography. This, by a stroke of rare good fortune, found its way to the world through the editorship of Dr. Elliott Coues, and with the editorial[*] notes is a valuable contribution to the history of the times.

Larpenteur was born in Fontainebleau, France, in 1803; came to America with his parents in 1813; went to St. Louis and at the age of twenty-one entered the fur trade. In 1833 he went to the mountains in the employ of Sublette and Campbell. In the following summer he made his way to the mouth of the Yellowstone where he remained at Fort William until Sublette and Campbell sold out to the American Fur Company, when he entered McKenzie's service at Fort Union. His life thereafter was of the most diversified character and he was engaged in a variety of callings, all of which terminated unsuccessfully. He died a disappointed man, November 15, 1872.

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[*] Forty Years a Fur Trader on the Upper Missouri, the Personal Narrative of Charles Larpenteur, 1833-72, edited, with many critical notes, by Elliott Coues. Maps, Views, and Portraits. In Two Volumes. New York, Francis P. Harper, 1898.

WARREN ANGUS FERRIS is another of the American Fur Company men whose interest to us arises solely from his literary work. He was born at Glens Falls, N. Y., December 20, 1810; was educated as a civil engineer; in 1830 entered the American Fur Company service as clerk, and remained with them until 1835, wandering over a vast section of the West; subsequently he moved to Texas where he lived in the practice of his profession until his death, which took place at Reinhardt, near Dallas, February 8, 1873.

Ferris' career in the Rocky mountains embraced the most interesting period of the fur trade. He followed the practice of keeping a journal and this in later years he worked up into a series of articles entitled *Life in the Rocky Mountains* which were published in the *Western Literary Messenger* of Buffalo, N. Y. It abounds in valuable data relating to the fur trade and is our sole authority on a number of points. It contains for example the first written description by an eyewitness of the geysers of the Yellowstone. The death of Henry Vanderburgh, the building of Fort Bonneville, the massacre of Etienne Provost's party by the Snakes, the origin of several important geographical names, and numerous other historic matters find their best authority in Ferris. His style is, unfortunately, laborious to a degree, and either he or his editor made a woful mix-up of the matter of dates. While the work is now of great historic value we can quite appreciate the causes which led the readers of the *Western Literary Messenger* to beseech the editor to give them no more of it.[10]

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[10] I am indebted to Mr. O. D. Wheeler, of St. Paul, for the data on Ferris' life, and the public are even more indebted to him for unearthing this historic treasure, which has remained buried in oblivion from the time it was published until the fall of 1900, when Mr. Wheeler discovered it.

CHAPTER XXIV.

CAPTAIN BONNEVILLE.

Bonneville a history-made man — Biographical sketch — Development of Bonneville's scheme — Organization of his expedition — Progress to Green river — Fort Bonneville — Winter quarters on Salmon river — Dispositions for the winter — Spring hunt on Malade river— Bonneville and Wyeth — Green river rendezvous of 1833 — Meager returns — Plans for ensuing year — Purpose of the Walker expedition — I. R. Walker — Zenas Leonard — Alfred K. Stephens — Leonard with Sinclair's free trappers join Milton Sublette — Composition of Walker's party — The expedition starts — Massacre of the Digger Indians — Peril in crossing the Sierras — Discovery of Yosemite — Reach the Pacific — Party sets out for home — The return route — Second massacre of Digger Indians — Arrival at rendezvous on Bear river — Review of the expedition — Captain Bonneville in the Crow country — The Captain abandons the Crow country — Arrangements for the winter of 1833-4 — Captain Bonneville makes an expedition to the Columbia — Reception at Fort Walla Walla — Return to winter quarters of his party — Annual rendezvous in Bear river valley — Gloomy prospects — Second expedition to the Columbia — Return to Snake river — Winter quarters on Bear river — Rendezvous of 1835 on Wind river — Return to the States — Biographical notes — Review of Captain Bonneville's enterprise — A business failure — Scientific accomplishment nothing — Bonneville's maps — Bonneville as a leader of an expedition — Bonneville takes wagons to Green river — Bonneville's breach of discipline — Bonneville and Irving — Criticism of Bancroft.

THE adventures of Captain Bonneville in the Rocky mountains from 1832 to 1835 have attained a prominence in the history of the West to which they are not entitled. They and their hero are an apt illustration of Diedrich Knickerbocker's profound idea of the power of history to rescue men and events from the "wide-spread, insatiable maw of oblivion." Captain Bonneville, so far as his work in the Rocky mountains is concerned, is a history-made man. Irving's popular work, which in later editions bears Captain Bonneville's name, is not in reality so much a record of that officer's adventures, as it is of all the transactions of a period in which the business of the fur trade in the Rocky mountains was at its height. Scarcely a third of the work has to do exclusively with Bonneville, but around this theme as a nucleus are gathered the events of the most interesting era of the fur trade, until the central figure in the narrative is encased in a frame more costly and attractive than the picture itself.[1]

Benjamin Louis Eulalie de Bonneville was born in France, April 14, 1796. His father, a well-educated man, and a publisher, who had actively discussed the questions of the day through his pamphlets, fell under the displeasure of the government and was imprisoned. Upon his release he sought permission to sail for America, but it was refused him. He contrived, however, to send Mme. Bonneville and her son Benjamin with Thomas Paine, who, likewise finding France a good country to be out of at this time, secretly sailed for America. Upon their arrival in the United States the Bonnevilles went to live for a time with Paine at New Rochelle. Through Paine's influence Benjamin secured a cadetship at West Point where he graduated in 1819. On the occasion of Lafayette's visit to America in 1825 he showed so much interest in the Bonneville family that the young officer was detailed to accompany him as aide on his tour of the States. When Lafayette returned to France he took Bonneville with him and the latter remained for some years an inmate of the Lafayette home. On his return to America he was assigned to duty on the western frontier, and there became deluded with the idea that there was a fortune for him in the fur trade. He began casting about for an opportunity to gratify this new ambition and the result was his famous expedition of 1832-5.

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[1] The authorities here relied upon are the following: *The Rocky Mountains, or Scenes, Incidents and Adventures in the Far West; Digested from the Journal of Captain B. L. E. Bonneville of the Army of the United States, and Illustrated from Various Other Sources. Washington Irving.*

Narrative of the Adventures of Zenas Leonard, a native of Clearfield County, Pa., who spent five years in trapping for furs, trading with the Indians in the Rocky Mountains, written by himself: Printed and Published by D. W. Moore, Clearfield, Pa., 1839. This exceedingly rare work was recently discovered by Mr. Horace Kephart, Librarian of the Mercantile Library in St. Louis. It is almost *unique* as only three or four copies are known to exist. Its chief value is the new light which it throws upon the Walker Expedition, under Bonneville's direction in 1833-34. Unfortunately Leonard's inaccuracy in matters where there are other authorities to check him, detracts from the value of his narrative in this case.

The Journal and Letters of N. J. Wyeth, the works of Townsend and others who crossed the plains while Bonneville was there; the correspondence of the American Fur Company, and the Rocky Mountain Fur Company — all furnish valuable hints as to Bonneville's operations. There are a few letters of Bonneville still extant, but his journals which Irving used appear to be lost.

Life in the Rocky Mountains, by W. A. Ferris.

Whether the prime mover in this enterprise was Bonneville himself, or certain business men in New York who wanted to enter the fur trade and thought the Captain a good man to conduct an expedition, does not appear. Bonneville secured a leave of absence from August, 1831, to October, 1833, with permission to spend it in the unexplored regions of the Far West. The letter from the War Department, granting this leave, states that it was "for the purpose of carrying into execution your design of exploring the country to the Rocky mountains and beyond, with a view to ascertaining the nature and character of the several tribes inhabiting those regions; the trade which might be profitably carried on with them; the quality of the soil, the productions, the minerals, the natural history, the climate, the geography and topography, as well as the geology of the various parts of the country." To these general purposes the Department added another — that of securing special information as to the Indian tribes, their numbers, methods of making war, their condition, equipment, alliances, etc. Captain Bonneville's expedition was to be of no expense to the United States.

This "design" of Captain Bonneville furnishes a clue to the arguments which he presented as the basis of his application for a leave of absence. It is certain, however, that whatever may have been his representations to the Department, the primary object of his enterprise was trade. The entire record of his work, so far as it has been preserved to us, proves this.

Bonneville entered into arrangements with Alfred Seton, of New York, one of the old Astorians, by which Seton and some associates were to provide the funds for a mountain expedition and Bonneville was to conduct its operations in the field. In carrying out this program the Captain organized a party of one hundred and ten men with two principal assistants, Mr. I. R. Walker, later of California renown, and Mr. M. S. Cerré, a member of a family well known in the fur trade of the West. A fine assortment of goods was provided and the equipment was in all respects a splendid one. Wagons were used on the expedition, contrary to the practice of the mountain traders generally. There were twenty of these vehicles drawn by oxen and mules. The whole organization was on the basis of strict military discipline, and to all outward appearances the enterprise promised to make a very formidable showing in the mountain trade.

The story of Bonneville's adventures has been told by Washington Irving in a more interesting way than it is likely ever to be told again. All that will be given here will be, as in the case of Astoria, a condensed sketch of the enterprise with such additional light as has been discovered since Irving wrote, together with an estimate of the value of Captain Bonneville's work as a part of the history of the West.

The final organization of the expedition took place at Fort Osage, ten miles from Independence, and the start from this point was made on the 1st of May, 1832. The journey to the mountains passed off without notable incident. Bonneville conducted his party on true military principles, so far as protection against the Indians was concerned, and he was evidently esteemed an excellent "partisan." The route was the usual one up the valleys of the Platte and Sweetwater rivers through South Pass and thence to Green river, where he arrived about noon on the 27th of July. The day before he was passed by an American Fur Company party under the well-known leader, Fontenelle. Both parties were much too late for the annual rendezvous in Pierre's Hole, which had already taken place some two weeks before. Bonneville and Fontenelle struck Green river nearly due west of South Pass at the mouth of Piney Creek, a tributary from the west. Bonneville calls this stream Grand Encampment creek, very likely from the circumstance of two large parties having gone into camp there. In a short time both parties moved farther up stream and established camps. Here the Captain proceeded to erect a trading post with the evident purpose of making a permanent establishment. The spot selected was on the west shore of the river, five miles above the mouth of Horse creek. The site was an ideal one, and the Captain erected the typical post, with palisade walls and flanking bastions at two diagonal corners. This was the post known in the history of the west as "Fort Bonneville," or "Bonneville's Old Fort," but the trappers called it "Fort Nonsense," or "Bonneville's Folly," from the fact that no use was ever made of it.[2]

The truth is that Bonneville found out, after the work was well under way, what he should have ascertained before it was begun, that, however suitable the upper valley of Green river might be for a summer rendezvous, it was no place for a permanent post; for the altitude was so high and the winter climate so severe, that Indians and trappers alike left it during the winter season. For his approaching winter quarters therefore he determined to seek a more hospitable climate, and, from such information as he could obtain, he fixed upon the headwaters of Salmon river as the most eligible spot. His stock not yet being all recuperated, he detached a small party under one Mathieu to pasture them for a time on the banks of Bear river with instructions to join him at winter quarters before the season of snow set in.

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[2] See List of Posts, Appendix F.

Bonneville himself set out for Jackson and Pierre's Hole on the 22nd of August. In Jackson Hole he found the unburied remains of two men, More and Foy, who had been murdered there by the Blackfeet just about a month before. The Captain passed by and examined the old battle field of Pierre's Hole and saw the gruesome evidences of the conflict which had lately taken place there. The site for the winter's camping ground on the Salmon river was reached on the 26th of September and the erection of winter quarters was at once begun. This location was on the west bank of the river, three miles below the Forks (mouth of the Lemhi) in a grove of cottonwoods. According to Ferris, who saw it about a month later and who was naturally an unfriendly critic of an opposition trader, it was a "miserable establishment," consisting of "several log cabins, low, badly constructed, and admirably situated for besiegers only who would be sheltered on every side by timber, brush, etc." The latitude of the place, as determined by Captain Bonneville, was N 45 degrees, 51 minutes, 24 seconds, nearly fifty miles too far north.

While the preparations for winter quarters were going on, Captain Bonneville dispatched three parties of hunters in various directions and retained only twenty men with himself. The autumn hunt wore away without incident of note, except the Captain's interesting intercourse with the Nez Perce Indians. Gradually the hunters returned, nearly all of them having had encounters of a more or less disastrous nature with the Blackfeet. The camp now became crowded, not only with the people belonging to the company, but with numerous bands of the Nez Perce, Flathead and Pend d'Oreille Indians. The large herds of horses ate up the pasturage while the game resources of the immediate neighborhood were by no means adequate to the wants of the multitude that had to be fed. Captain Bonneville accordingly detached about fifty men to hunt and trap on

Snake river with orders to join him on Horse creek in the Green river valley in the following July. The Indians soon moved in search of better feed, and the Captain, after sufficient delay to enable him secretly to cache his surplus goods, followed in their wake on the 20th of November. He soon overtook the Indians in their new camping ground and remained there until the 9th of December, when the whole party moved to a new location — a snug retreat in the mountains on Lemhi Fork of Salmon river where they remained until the festive Christmas season took place.

On the 26th of December, with thirteen hunters well armed and mounted, Captain Bonneville set out in search of Mathieu, who had been detached at Green river to recuperate his horses in Bear river valley, and whose failure to appear began to cause serious apprehension. The Captain's route lay up the Lemhi river, thence through John Day Defile or Pass to John Day (now Little Lost) river; thence to Godin river, now called Big Lost river; thence across the lava plains, passing the base of the westernmost of the Three Buttes; and finally, after great danger and hardship from the severe cold weather, the party reached the Snake river near the mouth of the Portneuf, January 12, 1833. Here they soon fell in with some of Mathieu's party, and on the 3rd of February were joined by that leader himself. Mathieu had had bad luck for he had lately been surprised by the Indians and had lost three of his men.

After a residence of three weeks in Mathieu's encampment, Captain Bonneville set out, February 19, with sixteen men for the caches on Salmon river, leaving as many more men on Snake river. The Captain's party made the journey in safety and without noteworthy incident, and about the middle of March arrived at the caches, which were found untouched.

After having taken such articles as he was in need of, Captain Bonneville prepared for his spring hunt. He dispatched Cerré and Hodgkiss, the clerk, with an assortment of goods to trade with the neighboring Indians, with instructions to join him at the Salmon river caches on June 15th. For himself and the rest of the party, numbering about twenty, he had selected the valley of the Malade river as the field of operations. He arrived in the valley of Godin river about the 1st of April and here determined to pause a short time, it being a good muskrat country, when, to his great annoyance, he fell upon the trail of a party of whites who had recently passed that way in the same direction that he himself was going. So certain was it that the Captain had on his hands a rival band of trappers that he not only detached two spies to ascertain their movements, but set forward at full speed to reach the trapping ground as soon as possible. Upon meeting the returning spies it was learned that Milton G. Sublette and J. B. Gervais, partners in the Rocky Mountain Fur Company, themselves able and experienced mountaineers, with a party of twenty-one trained men, were en route for the very hunting ground selected by Captain Bonneville for his spring hunt. This news well-nigh took the life out of the Captain's movement, but for the present he hung close upon the skirts of his adversaries. The snow was still so deep that neither party could cross the divide between Godin river and the Malade, and they had to wait where they were until the 25th of April. The month of May was spent by the rival parties on the headwaters of the Malade, and although Captain Bonneville's historian has considerately passed over the details of the hunt, it is evident that its results were not altogether satisfactory.

Early in June the Captain set out for the Salmon river rendezvous, where he arrived safely on the 15th and met by appointment his other parties. The caches were safe and the party having been re-equipped, set out to find Hodgkiss, who had been left with the Nez Perces on the Snake river plain. He was found on the 24th of June. At the place of meeting, which was about sixteen miles from Henry Fork of Snake river, Nathaniel J. Wyeth, who was on his way East, and was traveling in company with Mr. Ermatinger and party of the Hudson Bay Company, overtook the Captain. The British trader being at the time short of supplies, Captain Bonneville thought the opportunity a good one to do the trading with the Indians himself. He accordingly opened his goods, but not an Indian would touch the tempting bait. The trader's control of them was perfect, and the Captain was completely disconcerted.

While at this camp Wyeth proposed to Captain Bonneville a joint hunt in the country to the southwest as far as to the mountains of California. The Captain accepted the proposition, but subsequently the plan fell through, and he left for Green river on the 6th of July. No incident of moment happened on the journey, and his party arrived at rendezvous on the 13th of July.[3]

The Captain was now at the end of his first year in the mountains and was about to take stock of the results of his enterprise thus far. The party of fifty whom he had detached to work up the country to the south and west had fallen in with Milton Sublette and Gervais, and their time had been frittered away in useless contention with their rivals. A trader (probably Montero by name) had been sent the year before to make a fall hunt in the Crow country with instructions to come to the Salmon river wintering ground upon its completion. He had not been seen since until at the present rendezvous where Captain Bonneville heard for the first time the woful tale of his misfortunes. While in the Crow country with a village of that tribe, he was relieved of nearly all his property — horses, traps, merchandise — by those polite freebooters, who even seduced most of his men to desert and remain in their own camp. With the few who remained faithful he sought the protection of the new Fort Cass at the mouth of the Bighorn and remained in its vicinity during the winter. But he found that he had jumped from the frying pan into the fire. His men were constantly stealing away to the fort with all the furs they could get hold of and trading them for liquor. The American Fur Company was undoubtedly back of this faithless behavior as well as the previous conduct of the Crows, among whom they had active and unscrupulous agents.

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[3] The dates of Wyeth's journal for his own departure and arrival are July 7th and July 15th.

Early in the spring the luckless trader set out to try his fortune on the headwaters of Powder river. It happened that about this time the Aricara Indians, that ever treacherous and hostile tribe, had located on the Platte river, and were making the whole country round about unsafe to any but large parties. That very spring a party under Bridger and Fraeb and another under a well-known free trapper by the name of Harris had lost their horses at the hands of these Indians. Soon after leaving Fort Cass a war party of Aricaras were found to be hovering about Montero's camp and in the course of a few days succeeded in capturing all his horses. In doing this they undertook to allay suspicions by sending two of their warriors on a friendly mission to camp while the rest should drive off the horses. The trappers, suspecting something, seized the two Indians, but not in time to save the horses. Negotiations then ensued for the ransom of the prisoners. The trappers refused to give them up except upon a restoration of all the horses, and threatened to burn the captives if this were not done. The Indians left their companions to the mercy of their captors, who, true to their threat, consigned them to the flames. This unlucky event completed the ruin of the partisan and he turned up at rendezvous with only himself, and thankful for that much.

Putting everything together Captain Bonneville did not have as a result of a year's work of his party of over one hundred men more than about twenty-three packs of beaver, or less than twenty skins to the man for his party. That would scarcely pay the wages of his men.[4]

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[4] "Messrs. Bonneville & Co. 22½ packs. Few goods, few horses, and poor Capt. Cerry [Cerré] goes home. B. remains." — Wyeth *Sources of the History of Oregon*, p. 70.

"Bonneville, seeing that he is nearly gone, plays the devil with us.

Captain Bonneville remained at rendezvous twelve days doing what he could to keep up his end with the Rocky Mountain and American Fur Companies, who were encamped in the neighborhood. In making his arrangements for the ensuing year his principal move was to be, according to his own representation, as recorded by Irving, a thorough exploration of Great Salt Lake and the country around it. This work he entrusted to his principal assistant, Mr. I. R. Walker. For the purpose of conveying his meager returns to the states he delegated his second assistant, Mr. M. S. Cerré, who was to follow the river route in company with the parties of Campbell and Wyeth. For himself he decided to remain and inaugurate a fall hunt in the Crow country, notwithstanding that his leave of absence would expire in the following October.

A shadow of doubt will always attach to the statement of motives which actuated Captain Bonneville in regard to this expedition. According to Irving it was one of the Captain's cherished schemes "to have the [Great Salt] lake properly explored, and all its secrets revealed; and while it was one in which his imagination evidently took a leading part, he believed that it would be attended with great profit, from the numerous beaver streams with which the lake must be fringed." His instructions to Walker, who was charged

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He offers to common hands $350 to $1,000 per annum, knowing that when the time is up, he will pay them with wind. Many of the men that I have brought out, having received so large an allowance in St. Louis, have left me. I will use every effort to get them back. Bonneville has 23 packs of beaver, principally obtained from trappers indebted to the American Fur Company, and Fontenelle and Drips. He is out of goods and can get no supply this year. I am in hopes we shall get clear of him. . . . If he continues as he has done, $80,000 will not save him. Sublette's company are doing well. They have none but hired men and can not be put down by competition." Letter from Fontenelle to McKenzie, written at Green river rendezvous two days before Bonneville's departure.

"It is conceded that Bonneville, out of all his grand expedition will have only enough to pay the wages of his men." Chouteau to Astor, September 25, 1833.

with the expedition, and "in whose experience and ability he had great confidence," were "to keep along the shores of the lake, and trap in all the streams along his route." For this purpose Walker was given a party of forty men and Captain Bonneville's resources were taxed to the utmost to supply a complete equipment. The expedition was to be absent for a year and was to meet in the following summer at the appointed place of rendezvous in Bear river valley.

Such is the unequivocal statement of Captain Bonneville, as reported by Irving, in regard to the motives of his so-called Salt Lake expedition. It constitutes the sole evidence that the exploration of Great Salt Lake was any part of the Captain's scheme. Everything else goes to show that his plan was to send an expedition to California and that the Salt Lake project was wholly an afterthought. Already only two weeks before Captain Bonneville had agreed to an arrangement with Wyeth for exactly such an expedition, but for some reason it had fallen through, probably because the Captain preferred to conduct it entirely with his own resources and not place himself in any way in the hands of the energetic New Englander. Three men who were members of the party, Walker himself, George Nidiver, and Zenas Leonard, afterwards wrote up their recollections of the expedition. All of them speak of it as being from the first intended to go to California. Leonard for example says that Walker "was ordered to steer through an unknown country toward the Pacific, and if he did not find beaver he should return to the Great Salt Lake in the following summer. . . . I was anxious to go to the coast of the Pacific, and for that purpose hired with Mr. Walker as clerk for a certain sum per year." Nidiver says (Bancroft, vol. XX., p. 41, n. 14): "In the spring [of 1833] there were a large number of trappers gathered at the rendezvous in Green river valley, and among them Captain Walker and company bound for California. We joined him, making in all a party of thirty-six."

Such is the direct evidence of those who went on the expedition. The circumstantial proof is equally convincing. If Captain Bonneville's instructions were to hold to the shore of Great Salt Lake, carrying on the joint purposes of exploration and trapping, why did he supply the party for a year and put off a meeting with them until the following summer? The remotest point on Great Salt Lake was scarcely two hundred miles from rendezvous, and this Captain Bonneville knew very well at the time. If this ambitious explorer were really so absorbed in his desire to learn all about the Great Salt Lake, how happened it that he remained three years in the country and passed repeatedly within fifty or a hundred miles of the lake but never went to see it? Explorers do not ordinarily explore in that way.

The truth is Captain Bonneville sent out a trapping expedition to go through to California. The information derived from Wyeth had convinced him that there was every prospect of success in that direction. He had no thoughts of exploration except as a mere incident to the main purpose. Not an instrument of any kind for taking observations did he provide with the elaborate equipment. It was beaver fur, not geographical knowledge, that he was after. His entire sinews of war were supplied by those who were looking for profits. They had not equipped him for an exploring tour, and his experience during the past year had warned him that he must bestir himself more vigorously if he was to meet the expectations of his backers. That the Captain deliberately planned an expensive exploring tour is therefore not to be supposed. Irving himself gives a hint of the real motive of the expedition in his reference to its unfortunate outcome. "The failure of the expedition," he says, "was a blow to his [Bonneville's] pride, and a still greater blow to his purse." It was principally a blow to his purse, for surely his pride ought to have been more gratified by what the Walker party actually did in the line of exploration than what it would have accomplished had it remained on the borders of Great Salt Lake.

Having premised this much upon the scope and purpose of this expedition it is in order to follow the party upon its adventurous path to and from the Pacific. Walker, the leader, was a proper man for that sort of work. He had had a long and varied experience in the Santa Fe and Missouri trade. He understood the Indians well, loved the hardships of wilderness life and was particularly fond of adventure in new and untried fields. In later years he became a conspicuous character in California history.

Zenas Leonard, Mr. Walker's clerk, whose connection with the expedition has only recently come to light, is now our most circumstantial authority upon its history. He was a native of Clearfield county, Pennsylvania, and like many another youth, sought to try his fortune in the unexplored regions beyond the Mississippi. He left his native state in the spring of 1831, and having engaged in the service of Gant and Blackwell of St. Louis, left that city on April 24th with a party of seventy men on an expedition to the mountains. The route was the usual one by way of the Platte river, although at that time it was not much traveled. The party arrived at the Forks of the Platte on the 1st, and at Laramie river on the 27th, of August. Here they commenced their fall trapping campaign. Leonard joined a party of twenty-one men under Alfred K. Stephens, whose immediate field of labor was along the valley of the Laramie. The party lost all their horses during the winter and then undertook to go to Santa Fe where Stephens had been before. They made an ineffectual attempt to penetrate the mountains and finally, on the 20th of April, 1832, they started for the mouth of the Laramie, where the several divisions of their company were to meet in the spring. None of the other parties, however, put in an appearance, and Stephens and his men were still waiting when Sublette and Fitzpatrick came along with the caravan bound for the annual rendezvous in Pierre's Hole. The little band, discouraged and forlorn, got to quarreling among themselves, and finally abandoned further effort to hunt independently and hired out to Fitzpatrick. Stephens sold his furs to Fitzpatrick, and they were cached near the Laramie pending Sublette's return from the rendezvous.

The whole party then went on to the rendezvous in Pierre's Hole and Leonard participated in the battle with the Blackfeet on the 18th of July. A day or two afterward Stephens and Fitzpatrick quarreled about the terms of their bargain on the Laramie. Stephens, considering himself treated unfairly, hired four men and started back to seize the furs before Sublette, who had not yet recovered from his wound in the late battle, could overtake them. In the valley of Jackson Hole this little party and seven men of Wyeth's expedition who were returning home, were attacked by the Blackfeet. Two men were killed and Stephens was severely wounded. He returned to Pierre's Hole, where he remained until July 30, when he set out for home with the party of Wm. L. Sublette. He died the same day and was buried near the trail in the southeast extremity of Pierre's Hole.[5]

Leonard and one Saunders joined the party of fifteen free trappers who went with Milton Sublette to the southwest from Pierre's Hole for the fall hunt of 1832. They wandered over an immense stretch of territory, nearly to the sources of the Owyhee river in northern Nevada, and then made their way back to the neighborhood of Great Salt Lake. From this locality they moved east to the Crow country and thence southwest to the Platte at the mouth of the Laramie. Here they found a letter from Gant detailing a catalogue of misfortunes which effectually disposed of any further hope of business in that quarter. Leonard and Saunders, becoming discouraged, resolved to go to the Green river rendezvous of 1833, then about to assemble. Arrived there they fell in with Walker and engaged for the California expedition. Such were some of the experiences of the man who is fairly entitled to be called the historian of the Walker expedition to California in 1833.

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[5] At Stephen's request "a few minutes before his death" Sublette took back to St. Louis 86 pounds beaver and 7 pounds castorum belonging to Stephens. The receipt for this property is still in existence in the possession of M. L. Gray of St. Louis.

Walker's party, consisting of forty men,[6] left Green river July 24, 1833. They went directly to the valley of Great Salt Lake, where they stopped to lay in their final supply of buffalo meat. The last buffalo was killed August 4th, and three days later the party bade farewell to the lake at its western extremity and "took a westerly course into the most extensive and barren plains I have ever seen." (Leonard.) Wending their painful way through the Salt Lake desert they finally reached the Humboldt river, to which they gave the name Barren, because "the country, natives, and everything belonging to it justly deserve the name." On the 4th of October they arrived at the sinks of the Humboldt, and here there transpired an event which has cast a lasting odium upon the expedition.

While following down the course of the Humboldt parties of the Pai-ute or Digger Indians were encountered — a forlorn and impoverished race, generally inoffensive and friendly to the whites. But from some not very patent cause they incurred the enmity of Walker's men. It may have been their thefts — both Irving's and Leonard's accounts say as much — and this racial weakness of the Indian tribes makes it easy to believe so — but it is more probable that these reckless trappers, far away from even wilderness law, and among Indians whom they saw that they could insult with impunity, were inclined to treat them much as they would prowling and pilfering wolves.

Their earlier experiences with these Indians are thus related by Leonard: "We continued traveling down the river, now and then catching a few beaver. But as we continued extending our acquaintance with the natives, they began to practice their national failing of stealing. So eager were they to possess themselves of our traps that we were forced to quit trapping in this vicinity and make for some other quarter. The great annoyance we sustained in this greatly displeased some of our men, and they were for taking vengeance before we left the country — but this was not the disposition of Captain Walker. These discontents being out hunting one day, fell in with a few Indians, two or three of whom they killed and then returned to camp, not daring to let the Captain know it. The next day while out hunting they repeated the same violation, but this time were not so successful, for the Captain found it out, and immediately took measures for its effectual suppression."

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[6] According to Leonard there must have been nearly sixty in the party. Probably the forty were all Bonneville's men, but others joined the expedition.

Upon arriving at the Humboldt Lakes it was found that the Indians were about in great numbers and it was feared that trouble was brewing. Finally one day matters came to a head in the following summary fashion: "A little before sunset, on taking a view of the surrounding waste with a spy glass, we discovered smoke issuing from the high grass in every direction. This was sufficient to convince us that we were in the midst of a large body of Indians, but as we could see no timber to go to, we concluded that it would be as well to remain in our present situation and defend ourselves as well as we could. We readily guessed that these Indians were in arms to avenge the death of those our men had killed up the river, and if they could succeed in getting any advantage over us, we had no expectation that they would give us any quarter. Our first care, therefore, was to secure our horses, which we did by fastening them all together and then hitching them to pickets driven into the ground. This done, we commenced constructing something for our own safety. The lake was immediately in our rear, and piling up all our baggage in front, we had quite a substantial breastwork — which would have been as impregnable to the Indian arrows as were the cotton bales to the British bullets at New Orleans in 1815.

"But before we had got everything completed the Indians issued from their hiding place in the grass, to the number, as near as I could guess, of eight or nine hundred, and marched straight toward us, dancing and singing in the greatest glee. When within about one hundred and fifty yards of us they all sat down on the ground and dispatched five of their chiefs to inquire whether they might come in and smoke with us. This request Captain Walker very prudently refused, as they evidently had no good intentions, but told them that he was willing to meet them half way between the breastwork and where their people were sitting. This appeared to displease them very much, and they went back not the least bit pleased with the reception they had met with.

"After the five deputies related the result of their visit to their constituents, a part of them rose and signed to us that they were coming to our camp. At this ten or twelve of our men mounted the breastwork and signed to them that if they advanced a step farther it would be at the peril of their lives. They wanted to know in what way we would do it. Our guns were exhibited as the weapons of death. This they seemed to discredit and only laughed at us. Then they wanted to see what effect our guns would have on some ducks that were swimming in the lake near the shore. We fired at the ducks, thinking in this way to strike terror into the savages and drive them away. The ducks were killed, which astonished the Indians a good deal, but not so much as the noise of the guns — which caused them to fall flat to the ground. After this they put up a beaver skin on a bank for us to shoot at for their gratification, when they left us for the night. This night we stationed a strong guard, but no Indians made their appearance, and we were permitted to pass the night in pleasant dreams.

"Early in the morning we resumed our journey along the lakes, without seeing any signs of Indians until after sunrise, when we discovered them issuing from the high grass in front, rear, and on either side of us. This caused great alarm among our men at first, as we thought that they had surrounded us on purpose; but it appeared that we had only happened among them, and they were as much frightened as we. From this we turned our course from the border of the lake into the plain. We had not traveled far when the Indians began to move after us — first in small numbers, but presently in large companies. They did not approach near until we had traveled in this way for several hours, when they began to send small parties in advance, who would solicit us most earnestly to stop and smoke with them. After they had repeated this several times we began to understand their motive — which was to detain us in order to let their whole force come up and surround us, or to get into close quarters with us, when their bows and arrows would be as fatal and more effective than fire-arms.

" We now began to be a little stern with them, and gave them to understand that if they continued to trouble us they would do it at their own risk. In this manner we were teased until a party of eighty or one hundred came forward who appeared more saucy and bold than any others. This greatly excited Captain Walker, who was naturally of a very cool temperament, and he gave orders for the charge, saying that there was nothing equal to a good start in such a case.

" This was sufficient. A number of our men had never been engaged in any fighting with the Indians, and were anxious to try their skill. When our commander gave his consent to chastise these Indians and give them an idea of our strength, thirty-two of us dismounted and prepared ourselves to give a severe blow. We tied our extra horses to some shrubs and left them with the main body of the company, and then selecting each a choice steed, mounted and surrounded this party of Indians. We closed in on them and fired, leaving thirty-nine dead on the field, which was nearly the half. The remainder were overwhelmed with dismay, running into the high grass in every direction, howling in the most lamentable manner. Captain Walker then gave orders to some of the men to take the bows and arrows of the fallen Indians and put the wounded out of misery.

"The severity with which we dealt with these Indians may be revolting to the heart of the philanthropist; but the circumstances of the case altogether atone for the cruelty. It must be borne in mind that we were far removed from any succor in case we were surrounded, and that the country we were in was swarming with hostile savages, sufficiently numerous to devour us. Our object was to strike a decisive blow. This we did, even to a greater extent than we had intended." [7]

It will be seen without much difficulty from the foregoing narrative that this atrocious act was largely the result of a guilty conscience. The thefts of the traps had been punished by the slaughter of several of the natives and the presence of so many of their people so soon afterward very reasonably excited alarm lest they were bent on revenge. With any other tribe of Indians this would have been the case, and the men can hardly be blamed for feeling very much concerned about their own safety. There was certainly more excuse for their last act than for those which led to it.

This was not the end of the trouble with these poor Indians. A week later when the party were involved in the mountain labyrinths and were seeking a way across the Sierra, Captain Walker, Nidiver, and Leonard were out together exploring for a pass. While thus engaged the following scene transpired, as related by Leonard: "Nidiver was separated from us when two Indians made their appearance, but as soon as they saw us, they took flight and ran directly towards Nidiver, who, at once supposing that they had been committing some mischief with us, and as they were running one behind the other, killed them both at one shot. After this unpleasant circumstance we went back to our horses and thence to camp. Mr. Nidiver was very sorry when he discovered what he had done."

It was October 10th, according to Leonard, when the party left Battle Lakes and undertook to cross the mountains. The task proved one of great difficulty and terrible suffering. Provisions became entirely exhausted. Twenty-four horses were lost on the mountains, seventeen of them being used for food. The party found no game at all until they reached the other side. The first food of any account procured was a basket of acorns which a frightened Indian let drop when he saw the party. This was October 25th.

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[7] "The lakes have been named Battle Lakes." Leonard.

From Leonard's account, when the party arrived at the verge of the Sierra they found it so steep as to be impossible of descent in most places and they were forced to explore for a long while before they found a practicable route. On the first day of their search they killed a small deer, "the first game larger than a rabbit we had killed since the 4th of August, when we killed our last buffalo near the Great Salt Lake." That day the party had to let their horses down by ropes over a long slope of loose rocks, which they accomplished in time for their evening camp. The hunters came in after dark with two large black-tailed deer and a black bear. The famine was over, the redwood and balsam of the sunny slopes of the mountains had taken the place of the snow-covered tops of the Sierras, and in the far distance the eye ranged over a vast plain, which, as they thought, sank away into the bosom of the Pacific.

The party reached the foot of the main range on October 30th. In the course of the next few days they passed certain natural features which, to one familiar with that region, might lead to an identification of their route. Soon after leaving the base of the mountains they passed "some trees of the redwood species, incredibly large, some of which would measure from sixteen to eighteen fathoms around the trunk at the height of a man's head above the ground." Soon afterward they fell upon a river whose course they followed for a considerable distance. "Its bed lay very deep, forming very high banks even in smooth and level parts of the country; but where there are rocks its appearance is beyond doubt the most remarkable of any other water course. In some places the rocks are piled up perpendicular to such a height that a man on top, viewed from the bed of the river, does not look larger than a small child. From the appearance of that precipice it is not exaggerating to state that they may be found from a quarter to half a mile high, and many of them no wider at the top than at the bottom." May this have been the first visit of Americans to the far-famed Yosemite?[8]

On the night of November 12th (Leonard) occurred the meteoric shower of 1833, and it caused great terror to some of the more superstitious of the party; but Captain Walker, with the versatility of Columbus when the magnetic needle went wrong, explained it all away for them. Early the next morning they came to where the tide rose and fell and soon reached a bay, which was of course that of San Francisco. They did not long remain here but set out in a southern direction and on the 20th caught sight of the broad Pacific.

It is not intended to follow in detail the doings of the party during the ensuing winter, for that properly belongs to the history of California with which we are not at present concerned. Suffice it to say that the day after their arrival at the Pacific they met the Boston ship *Ladoga*, Captain Bradshaw (or as Leonard calls him, Baggshaw), and were hospitably entertained by him. Captain Bradshaw received the furs which they had caught on their way across the mountains and paid for them in provisions.

The winter slipped away quickly in the enticing sunny climate of California, while the bull fights, horse races, and occasional hunts made the whole experience a very paradise compared with the rugged life of a beaver trapper in the heart of the Rocky mountains. We may well imagine that it was with some reluctance that the party, upon the approach of spring, turned their faces again toward the inhospitable region where they had endured so much hardship. In fact six of their number, all of them mechanics, remained, "with the determination of making a permanent residence in the country, and never again returning to the States"; while the rest of them "lazily left our camp for the East." The returning party numbered, according to Leonard, fifty-two men, with three hundred and sixty-five horses, forty-seven beef and thirty dogs, together with an outfit of provisions. The departure was on the 14th of February, 1834.

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[8] It is said that Walker requested that the epitaph on his tombstone record the fact that he discovered the Yosemite wonderland.

The return route lay at first up the San Joaquin valley. The progress of the party was very leisurely and just before starting to cross the southern end of the Sierras, they hired two Indian guides under whose leadership they made the passage in safety, though with some difficulty. The guides were dismissed on the 1st day of March.

From this point the party turned north, keeping well into the foothills of the mountains, where they could secure water, intending to hold this direction until they should reach the outgoing trail of the preceding year. Once, however, they undertook to strike directly across the desert to the east and thus shorten the journey, but after traveling two days without water and being reduced to the most desperate straits, they returned to the mountains and continued north, or even northwest, until they reached their old trail south of the Battle Lakes.

While passing the neighborhood of the lakes they fell in with apparently the same band of Indians with whom they had dealt so severely on the way out. "All along our route from the mountains thus far," says Leonard, "we had seen a great number of Indians, but now when we had reached the vicinity of the place where we had had the skirmish with the savages when going to the coast, they appeared to rise in double the numbers that they did at that time, and as we were then compelled to fight them, we saw by their movements now that this would be the only course to pursue. We had used every endeavor that we could think of to reconcile and make them friendly but all to no purpose. We had given them one present after another, made them all the strongest manifestations of a desire for peace on our part, by promising to do battle against their enemies, if required, and we found that our own safety and comfort demanded that they should be severely chastised for provoking us to such a measure. Now that we were a good deal aggravated some of our men said hard things about what they would do if we should again come in contact with these provoking Indians; and our Captain was afraid that, if once engaged, the passions of his men would become so wild that he could not call them off while there was an Indian left to be slaughtered.

"Being thus compelled to fight, as we thought, in a good cause and in self-defense, we drew up in battle array and fell on the Indians in the wildest and most ferocious manner we could, which struck dismay throughout the whole crowd, killing fourteen, besides wounding a great many more, as we rode right over them. Our men were soon called off, only three of whom were slightly wounded.

"This decisive stroke appeared to give the Indians every satisfaction they desired, as we were afterwards permitted to pass through their country without molestation."

The party retraced their route along the Humboldt, but instead of passing over to the Great Salt Lake, went north to the Snake river and thence made their way to the appointed rendezvous on Bear river, where they arrived about June 1st. It was not until the 20th of the month that Captain Bonneville put in an appearance.[9]

The Walker California Expedition was a great disappointment to Bonneville, and he has attributed its failure to a disobedience of orders. In this he was not only unjust, but actually misrepresented the affair. The evidence is overwhelming that the expedition left Green river with the full and primary expectation of going to the Pacific. Had they come back successful, so far as their hunt was concerned, and had they not sullied the expedition with such revolting barbarity toward the Indians, there is no doubt that Captain Bonneville would have been entirely satisfied. Concerning the slaughter of so many of the Indians, a partial explanation has already been given. These Indians were of a harmless, destitute character, but no doubt very troublesome, as most Indians are, from their thieving propensities. Being little qualified for active resistance the trappers were more careless of their treatment of them, and some of the more reckless ones punished the thieves with summary death. Later when such great numbers surrounded them on the shores of Humboldt Lake, they naturally surmised that revenge was their purpose, and this led to the killing of so many at this point. On their return the following year, they of course had still more reason to fear a spirit of revenge, and so they again sought safety by a desperate blow which should strike terror into the Indians. Their plan for getting rid of their troublesome guests was certainly most successful, but the blood of these fifty or more Indians will always remain a blot upon the record of this otherwise romantic expedition.[10]

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[9] Joseph Meek (see Mrs. Victor's *River of the West)* says that the party after leaving southern California crossed to the Colorado of the West, and in the country to the east of that stream fell in with the party of Henry Fraeb whose regular hunting ground was in the Colorado mountains. The united parties wandered over a great deal of country, including the valley of the Gila and North and Middle Parks of Colorado, winding up at the Green river rendezvous of 1834. If this prodigious journey were actually taken, and it may have been, it was only by a detachment of Walker's party and probably included none of Bonneville's men.

That portion of the route to which most interest attaches, from a geographical point of view, lies beyond the Humboldt Lakes. To the eastward the course of the Humboldt river marks the line of their journey. But just where it passed over the Sierras is a matter of speculation. It may be inferred from the similarity of description to natural features, that the party came down from the mountains on the head of Merced river, California. That they entered the Sierras to the southwest of the Humboldt Lakes seems almost certain from the fact that on their return in the following year along the east slope of the mountains they joined the last year's trail some days before they reached the lakes. This they could not have done if the trail had led directly west or northwest from the lake. The neighborhood of Sonora Pass seems as likely as any to have been the approximate point of passage.

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[10] Zenas Leonard's further service in the Indian country was mainly among the Crows. He left for the East with Bonneville in 1835.

The expedition is of interest as being the second American trapping expedition that made its way from the neighborhood of Great Salt Lake to California. Jedediah S. Smith had already made the trip across the Sierras, probably a little to the south of the point where Walker crossed it.

Returning to Captain Bonneville we find that he left the Green river rendezvous of 1833 on July 25th, with his full party, and traveled by way of South Pass, the headwaters of the Sweetwater, and the Popo Agie to the Bighorn river. Campbell's party joined him near the head of the Bighorn. Fitzpatrick was with Campbell and was looking for a place for his fall hunt. Captain Stuart, of the British army, and Nathaniel J. Wyeth, of Boston, were also with him. Captain Bonneville, fearing that Fitzpatrick intended to forestall him in the approaching hunt, secretly detached a small trapping party and fixed a place for their rendezvous late in August, in the Medicine Lodge valley. A second party was likewise detached at the second cañon of the Bighorn. When the point was reached where the various parties who were going to St. Louis were to embark, all set to work on the construction of bullboats. Upon their completion Wyeth and Milton Sublette put off together; Campbell took charge of his own boats; and Cerré with thirty-six men and three boats conveyed the property of Captain Bonneville.

The Captain on the 17th of August set out for his rendezvous on the Medicine Lodge. Here he met the two detached parties who came in on the 29th, each with a tale of misfortune to relate. They had both fallen in with marauding parties of Indians and had lost a goodly number of horses and traps. As the neighborhood in which the

Captain then was seemed to be infested with Indians, he broke camp on the 1st of September and went over into the Wind river valley. Here he left his party, while he with three men went to get some needed articles, particularly traps, from the Green river caches. The Captain undertook to ascend Wind river and cross the range directly into the Green river valley. But he evidently struck into the mountains before he arrived near the head of the river, and he soon found himself in that entanglement of mountain peaks, snow drifts and impassable chasms where the principal source of Green river is to be found, and he was utterly baffled in his attempts to get through. Forced to beat a retreat, he swung around to the southwest, rounded the Wind river range by way of South Pass, and arrived at the old place of rendezvous on the 17th of September.

The Captain immediately set out on his return the following morning, and having good reason to believe that his little party was being shadowed by a band of Blackfeet, he moved with the greatest celerity and circumspection. His route lay north across what is now Union Pass, and he rejoined his party in the Wind river valley on the 24th. The Captain found that the footsteps of his parties in the Wind river valley had been persistently dogged by a band of Crows who made no effort to commit violence, but were evidently bent on robbery whenever opportunity should offer. The truth is that the emissaries of Kenneth McKenzie were everywhere present in the Crow country this fall. They succeeded in getting the Crows to rob Fitzpatrick of all he possessed, and they were trying to do the same thing with Captain Bonneville. The Captain concluded that the Crow country was no place for him at that time, and so he pulled up stakes and started for Green river. Moving by way of South Pass he arrived at the caches on the 14th of October.

Having raised his caches the Captain proceeded down the valley on the west side of Green river and arrived at Ham's Fork on the 26th of October. He then passed over to the

Bear river valley and reached the outlet of Bear lake on the 6th of November. On the 10th he visited the celebrated Beer Springs, as they were then called, or the Soda Springs of the present day. With three men he now took temporary leave of his party, appointing a place of rendezvous on Snake river, and set out on the 11th of November in quest of the fur trappers whom he had detached under Hodgkiss in the previous spring. Without notable incident, except the meeting of a band of friendly Bannocks, he found the trappers on the 20th of November, ensconced in the bosom of a mountain valley. The united party now returned to Snake river, where they met the party which had been left on Bear river. As this was the 4th of December immediate preparations were made to go into winter quarters in the valley of the Portneuf river.

Having completed his arrangements for a winter camp, and being satisfied that he was in a neighborhood of friendly Indians, Captain Bonneville determined to leave his people to their own devices during the winter, while he, with a few men, would make an exploring tour to the Columbia to study the trade prospects in that direction and would return the following March. Accordingly he set out with three men Christmas morning, 1833. Their route lay down the left bank of the Snake, generally at some little distance back from the river. On the 12th of January they arrived at Powder river, Oregon, and here would better have attempted to cross straight to the Columbia, as Hunt and the Astorians had done twenty-three years before. But instead they toiled over the mountains through which the Snake cuts its way, and after great hardship and peril, and many interesting encounters with the local tribes, they reached the Hudson Bay post on the Columbia, near the mouth of Walla Walla river, March 4, 1834.

The Captain had been encouraged, while sojourning among the Snake river tribes, to believe that there was a good opening for American trade on the Columbia. The Indians received him well and he determined to make the attempt. But his experience at Fort Walla Walla was far less encouraging. Although his reception was most hospitable, yet when he came to ask for supplies he was given to understand that it was contrary to the policy of the Hudson Bay Company to outfit competing traders in any way. As the Captain was wholly without supplies, he was compelled to relinquish instantly his plan of descending the Columbia, and to beat a precipitate retreat from the country. He was so much piqued at this action of Mr. Pambrun. the Hudson Bay factor, that he declined to accompany a party under one of the British traders, a Mr. Payette, who was going by a safe route across the mountains to convey provisions to some of their trappers in the upper Snake valley. The Captain and party set off by themselves on the 6th of March and made their way with much difficulty across the Blue mountains. They reached the winter camp on the Portneuf on the 12th of May. It was not, however, until the 1st of June that the whole party was reunited.

Two days were given up to general festivities when the party set out for the rendezvous in Bear river valley which was fixed at a point near where the river crosses the present state line between Wyoming and Utah. They reached the rendezvous without any other incident than a harmless encounter with the Blackfeet and an hilarious dissipation at the Soda Springs. They found Walker and his California party already waiting for them.

Soon after their arrival, Cerré came in from the States with the annual supplies. The customary carousal ensued and several days were given up to a good time. Walker's party were the heroes of the occasion. Their long and perilous journey across the mountains, their fights with the Indians, their glorious winter in the sunny clime of the Pacific, captivated the imaginations of the trappers and the whole company would instantly have joined any party bound for that far off country. Very different were the feelings of Captain Bonneville. If the returns of his first year's work in the mountains had been insufficient to pay expenses, those of the second year were such as to threaten instant collapse of the enterprise. His own parties had done but little, while Walker, on whom he had chiefly relied, came back empty-handed. He thus found himself with only ten to fifteen packs of beaver to send back to the States — not nearly enough to pay the wages of his men.[11]

In spite of the gloomy prospect Captain Bonneville decided to try another year in the mountains. Walker and Cerré were dispatched to the States with the slender returns of the year. A party was sent to the Crow country under one Montero to make the fall hunt in that section and eastward to the Black Hills, when they were to go to the Arkansas for the winter. The Captain himself had resolved upon another expedition to the Columbia.

Captain Bonneville took up his march on the 3rd of July with a party of twenty-three men. On the 10th he met a company of Hudson Bay trappers and succeeded with alcohol and honey in making the leader ingloriously drunk. He here learned that Nathaniel J. Wyeth had returned from the States and was bound for the Columbia to establish a business there. The Captain, not wishing to have a rival band along with him, made haste to cache his goods and get away; but unforeseen delays detained him until Wyeth came up. After another series of hospitalities and a general buffalo hunt, the Captain finally got off and wended his course down the Snake river, leaving Mr. Wyeth to build a post which he proposed to establish on the Portneuf. Nothing worthy of note occurred on the trip except the dangers caused by an extensive conflagration which enveloped the entire country in the neighborhood of the Grande Ronde. When the Captain arrived within thirty miles of Fort Walla Walla he thought to repeat his experiment of the winter before by sending a party to the post in quest of provisions. This second attempt was no more successful than the first, and as the Captain's party were well nigh out of provisions it was necessary to bestir themselves with vigor. They reached the Columbia about fifty miles below the Walla Walla and started down stream, but found that the influence of the Hudson Bay Company was everywhere supreme, and that they were liable to be literally starved out of the country. His various delays among the Indian tribes had now brought him so well along in the season that he must adopt the most energetic measures or winter would hem him in within an enemy's land and leave him at their mercy.

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[11] "The latter [Bonneville & Co.] I think by next year will be at an end with the mountains. They have sent down from twelve to fourteen packs of beaver, and admitting that it should sell at a high price, it is not enough to pay their returning hands." Fontenelle to Chouteau September 17, 1834.

"At the camp [on Twin Creek about 17 miles east of Bear river] we found Mr. Cerry and Mr. Walker who were returning to St. Louis with the furs collected by Mr. Bonneville's company, about 10 packs, and men going down to whom there is due $10,000." Wyeth — *Sources of the History of Oregon*, p. 225.

Making a virtue of necessity he set his face toward the east and on the 1st of October arrived at the base of the Blue mountains. Recent rains had extinguished the summer fires but there was so little game that the hunters could scarcely provide for the company. An untoward accident caused them to lose their way and spend three days buffeting around among the mountains, and it was not until the 30th of October that they arrived at the Snake river. When they reached the Portneuf they met two messengers from Montero's party who had come for additional supplies and to let the Captain know that they would spend the winter in the Crow country instead of going to the Arkansas, and would join him in the spring wherever he might appoint. The Captain took the messengers along with him to the caches on Bear river, where they arrived on the 17th of November, gave them the necessary articles, and sent them on their way with orders to meet him at the forks of Wind river in the latter part of June following. The Captain himself spent the winter in the upper end of Bear river valley. Buffalo were plenty and abundance reigned in camp, and with the interesting society of Indian bands and the occasional visit of some white trappers, the winter wore away in ideal hunter's fashion.

When spring opened the Captain collected all his property in Bear river valley, and on the 1st of April, 1835, proceeded by way of Ham's Fork to the valley of Green river. Just where he went during the spring is not certain, but the 10th of June found him "a little to the east of the Wind river mountains." He reached the place of rendezvous at the forks of Wind river about the 22nd of June. A few days later Montero joined him after a fairly successful campaign and at this place the united parties celebrated the 4th of July. Montero was then detached to continue his operations in the Crow country, while the Captain himself, with the rest of his party, set out for the settlements. He arrived there on the 22nd of August, 1835, and the mountains at last, in the words of Fontenelle, "were clear of him."[12]

[12] Bonneville's leave of absence having long expired before his return, he had been dropped from the rolls of the army. There was a very proper opposition among army officers to his reinstatement, and he would have been excluded altogether but for President Jackson, who reinstated him as a reward for his contributions to geographical knowledge of the country. In his subsequent career Bonneville served at various posts on the frontier, at Carlisle, Pa., and in the Seminole and Mexican Wars, being wounded in the latter. He remained loyal to the Union during the Civil War although his sympathies were on the other side. He was made Brevet Brigadier General but reached no more important command than that of Benton Barracks at St. Louis where he remained most of the time during the war. After peace came he retired from the service and took up his home at Fort Smith where he had previously formed close attachments. He died at Fort Smith June 12, 1878, and was buried in Bellefontaine Cemetery, St. Louis. Bonneville was married at Carlisle Barracks to Miss Ann Lewis. While stationed at St. Louis both his wife and daughter died. He was married again in 1870 to Miss Susan Neis of Fort Smith who survived him.

Bonneville had a brother in the American Navy who gained some distinction and was lost with the American ship *Wasp*.

"BONNEVILLE, BENJAMIN L. E. (Born in France. Appointed from N. Y.) Bvt. 2nd Lieut. Light Art., 11 Dec., 1815. 2nd Lieut., 15 Jan., 1817. 2nd Lieut. 8th Inf., 10 March, 1819. 1st Lieut., 9 July, 1820. Trans. to 7th Inf., 1 June, 1821. Dropped 31 May, 1834. Reinstated 19

Captain Bonneville's enterprise in the Rocky mountains was primarily, if not solely, for purposes of trade, whatever may have been the purposes set forth in his application for a leave of absence. There is nothing in the whole history of the expedition to justify any other view. The Captain in his service on the frontier had been an eye-witness of the various aspects of the fur trade and had conceived a desire to try his own hand at it. He could not of course ask so long a leave of absence solely to enable him to prosecute a private business, and he proposed to the government to turn his opportunities to valuable account in collecting information which would be of public utility. On this representation a leave of absence for two years was granted. The ground on which the government gave the leave, and the real purpose to which Captain Bonneville proposed to apply it, were therefore quite different. Let us see what he accomplished in both directions.

As to the commercial feature of the enterprise the result was an unqualified failure. Irving is generously silent on this subject but one may easily discern between the lines the author's conviction that the Captain had no aptitude as a trader. He was not trained to business, particularly the kind of business that was transacted in the mountains, and in his contacts with rival traders he was invariably worsted. He was unduly afraid of the Indians, was unwilling to take risks, and doubtless also held himself above the baser methods resorted to by irresponsible traders. He was lavish in his hospitality, popular with his men, and a great favorite with the free trappers who would travel hundreds of miles to avail themselves of the cheer of the Captain's tent. The Indians too liked him, but all — Indians and trappers alike — sold their furs in the other camp. The Captain hung on

April, 1836. Maj. 6th Inf., 15 July, 1845. Lieut. Col., 4th Inf., 7 May, 1849. Col. 3rd Inf., 3 Feb., 1855. Retired 9th Sept., 1861. Died 12 June, 1878. Bvt. Lieut. Col., 20 Aug., 1847, for gallant and meritorious service at Contreras and Churubusco. Bvt. Brig. Gen., 13 March, 1865, for long and faithful service in the army."—Powell's *List of Officers of the U. S. Army.*

for three years and probably would longer had his company been willing. The final outcome must have been a loss to them of many thousands of dollars.

The scientific feature of Captain Bonneville's expedition was, if possible, more of a failure than the commercial. The Captain never made any report of his work to the Department and it is probable that he had nothing of value to report. His adventures and observations were written up by Irving, and although that work contains a great deal of useful information, it is evident that a goodly portion of it was derived from other sources than from Captain Bonneville. The Captain's notes upon the nature of the country are limited and of no great value. His few astronomical observations for latitude and longitude are little better than wild guesses.[13] Irving felt constrained to apologize for his fantastic views of Great Salt Lake, and he would have felt more so if he had known that the Captain's estimate of the altitude of that body of water above the level of the ocean (one and three-fourths miles) was considerably more than twice the correct figure. Touching the Indian tribes scarcely any information is given by Irving which is in line with the instructions of the War Department to Captain Bonneville.

The one really valuable result of Captain Bonneville's expedition, so far as he alone is concerned, was his two maps of the Western country. One of these is of the region about the sources of the Missouri, Yellowstone, Snake, Green, Wind and Sweetwater rivers, including the region of Great Salt Lake. The other, on half the scale, included the country westward from the region embraced in the first map, to the Pacific ocean.

These maps have won for Captain Bonneville a degree of credit for promoting geographical discovery to which he is in no sense entitled. Nearly all of the valuable features appeared on Gallatin's map of the year before and were further brought to public notice by Gallatin's memoir accompanying the map. The three most important additions to geographical knowledge which must be credited to the Bonneville maps are the discovery and location of Humboldt river and lakes, the location of the San Joaquin river, California, and the approximately correct topography of the country around the sources of the Bighorn and Green rivers. In several respects Gallatin's map is more correct than Bonneville's. Gallatin's map unfortunately appeared in the transactions of a scientific society and came to the knowledge of only a select few. Bonneville's maps on the other hand had the name and fame of Washington Irving to advertise them to the world. Bonneville refers in no way to his debt to Gallatin or to Ashley and Smith, although it is evident that several important features were taken directly from these authorities.[14] It was these maps, compiled in large part from data derived from Gallatin, Ashley and Smith, that won for Bonneville his reinstatement in the army. "By the Eternal, Sir!" President Jackson is said to have exclaimed when Bonneville showed him his map, "I'll see that you are reinstated to your command. For this valuable service to the War Department and the country you deserve high promotion." It is evident, therefore, that in direct and substantial reward, as well in public reputation, Captain Bonneville has received from his government and from his countrymen more than he deserves.[15]

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[13] Longitude of Fort Bonneville 125 miles too far east.
Latitude of winter quarters on Salmon river 50 miles too far north.

[14] It is unaccountable that so careful a student as General G. K. Warren, who was directed by the War Department "to carefully read every report and examine every map of survey, reconnaissance and travel that could be obtained," and who, in fulfillment of this duty, produced a map and memoir which have become a landmark in the history of western geography, should have overlooked altogether the important work of Albert Gallatin. He could not have seen it or he would not have given Captain Bonneville the credit for so much of the information which it contains.

[15] Captain Bonneville gave his name to Great Salt Lake—an arrogant presumption when we consider the utter lack of any connection which his work had with that body of water. Posterity has very properly refused to recognize the name, although science has made use of it to designate the old Quaternary lake which once occupied a large part of the Great Basin.

As the manager of an expedition and as a popular leader Captain Bonneville was a distinct success. Had his function been solely that of conducting a party through the country, he might have rivaled Lewis and Clark in the skill with which he could accomplish it. He managed his men with great judgment, and it is no small item to his credit that, at a period when hunters and trappers were yearly lost in considerable numbers from the various companies, he remained three years in the mountains without the loss of a single life, where the men were in any wise under his personal control.

To Captain Bonneville belongs the credit of being the first to take wagons through South Pass and to Green river. Ashley had taken a wheeled cannon through to Utah Lake in 1826. Smith, Jackson and Sublette had taken wagons to Wind river in 1830; and the Santa Fe traders had taken wagons to Santa Fe in 1822. Bonneville's expedition was another step in the progress of civilization into the unsettled regions of the Far West.

As a soldier by education and profession, Captain Bonneville committed an unpardonable breach of discipline in overstaying his leave of absence. It was more than a simple lapse of duty, it was an act of ingratitude to his superiors, considering their great indulgence in granting him so long a leave. It was moreover unnecessary. The Captain sent in his returns in 1833 in ample time to have communicated with Washington before his leave expired. If he felt it imperative to stay with his expedition he should have applied for an extension of his leave. If not he should have reported to the Department and made his application in person. But he did neither although he had frequent opportunity to send communications. His action was therefore a gross delinquency and the War Department and Army authorities were quite right in resisting his reinstatement into the service.

After all it will not be far wrong to say that the greatest service which Captain Bonneville rendered his country was by falling into the hands of Washington Irving. His whole advancement hitherto had been largely due to his fortuitous associations, and Lafayette and Paine were the architects of his fortune more than he himself was. But his luckiest accident was in furnishing the occasion for the production of Irving's description of Rocky mountain life during the best days of the fur trade. *Captain Bonneville,* as this work is now commonly called, is a true and living picture of those early scenes, and taken with *Astoria* will ever remain our highest authority upon the events to which they relate.[16]

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[16] In a former chapter we paid our respects to Hubert Howe Bancroft in the matter of his reckless endeavors to discredit the work and defame the character of Washington Irving. We shall here call attention to similar efforts in regard to the narrative of Bonneville's adventures. Mr. Bancroft misstates the title of this work, in calling it "*Adventures of Captain Bonneville*" whereas, as given by Irving, it was *The Rocky Mountains, or, Scenes, Incidents and Adventures in the Far West; digested from the Journal of Captain B. L. E. Bonneville, of the Army of the United States, and illustrated from various other sources.* On the exterior covers of the book the name of Captain Bonneville did not appear at all. This fact is important, as illustrating Irving's own view of the scope of the work. It was virtually a history of the operations of the fur companies in the Rocky mountains during that period from 1832 to 1835 when the trade was at its prime. Irving, who never despised the embellishments of art, worked his historical narrative around the nucleus of a single adventure and gave it an added interest by that method. But the repeated assertions of Mr. Bancroft that it is only "an elegant romance," a "thrilling narrative out of nothing," "Irving's fiction," "duplicity," and the like, can proceed only from sheer ignorance or from a knavish purpose to belittle a great work.

In the case of *Astoria* we found Irving incomparably the most accurate historian of that enterprise — far more so than Mr. Bancroft, in spite of the greater facilities afforded by modern research. The same is also true of the later work. In regard to Captain Bonneville, it is clear that Irving himself did not have a high opinion of that officer's performance. If his never-failing generosity caused him to smooth over the short-comings of his hero, one can not fail to discern a lack of confidence in his actual achievements. Referring to the Great Salt Lake, for example, he characterizes the Captain's view of that body of water as "somewhat fanciful," and states that "he has evidently taken part of his ideas concerning it from the representations of others, who have somewhat exaggerated its features." Concerning the name

Lake Bonneville, that was given by Bonneville himself, and Irving adopted it from the Captain's map. There is no doubt whatever that Irving believed Bonneville's statement in regard to the Salt Lake expedition, and there would be no conclusive reason to doubt it today, but for the facts that have come to light through the narratives of Nidiver, Leonard and others, which were unknown to Irving.

As to Mr. Bancroft's infamous innuendoes regarding "well-paid panegyrics" as a result of Irving's acquaintance with Mr. Astor, the reader may note what we have said on this point in our treatment of *Astoria.*

Mr. Bancroft thus refers to Irving's humorous account of Bonneville's honey-alcohol entertainment on Bear river, July 10, 1834: "It is noticeable that whenever Irving sets two men drinking, his hero always acts the gentleman, while the other, especially if a foreigner, gets beastly drunk and disgraces himself." If Mr. Bancroft will consult Townsend's Narrative, page 84, he will find that no less an authority than Nathaniel J. Wyeth was himself greatly struck with the Captain's urbanity and politeness of manner in the face of considerable provocation, and that the unmannerly behavior was exactly where Irving places it.

But if Mr. Bancroft's treatment of Irving as an author is base and contemptible, his treatment of Captain Bonneville as a man is no less so. Small as may be our estimate of Bonneville's work in the Rocky mountains, we are bound to say that there is nothing in it all to justify the following vicious calumny: "A Frenchman by birth, and a captain in the United States Army, being in his coarse way a *bon vivant* and voluptuary, he preferred lording it in the forest with a troop of white and red savages at his heels, and every fortnight a new unmarried wife flaunting her brave finery, to sitting in satin sackcloth of conventional parlors and simpering silly nothings. . . . To shoot buffalo were rare fun; but men were the nobler game, whom to search out in their retreat and slaughter and scalp were glorious. What were the far-off natives of the Rocky mountains doing, that this reckless, blood-thirsty and cruel Frenchman should be permitted to kill them?" Mr. Bancroft should produce his facts. Can he give evidence of even *one* Indian who was killed or scalped or in any way maltreated by Captain Bonneville's order, or with his knowledge? If there is one characteristic of the expedition more prominent than another it was the humane treatment which Captain Bonneville always accorded the natives. If reference is made to the Walker massacre at the Humboldt Lakes, Captain Bonneville is morally no more responsible for that than Mr. Bancroft himself.

CHAPTER XXV.

NATHANIEL J. WYETH.

Hall J. Kelley — Wyeth's project — Formation of his party — Expedition at St. Louis — The start from Independence — Arrival at Pierre's Hole — Division of the party — Wyeth leaves Pierre's Hole for the Columbia — Arrives at Fort Vancouver — Spends winter on lower Columbia — Starts for the east in spring of 1833 — Proposes a joint hunt with Bonneville — Arrives at Green river rendezvous — Contract with Milton G. Sublette — Wyeth at Fort Union — Arrival in Boston — The Columbia River Fishing and Trading Company — Wyeth starts on his second expedition — Leaves Independence — M. G. Sublette compelled to return — Wyeth reaches Green river — Fitzpatrick repudiates Wyeth's contract with M. G. Sublette — Wyeth meets Captain Bonneville — Commences erection of Fort Hall — Reaches Fort Vancouver — Arrival of the *May Dacre* — Wyeth's operations in fall and winter of 1834-5 — Builds Fort Williams — Ill success and ill health — Wyeth closes up his business.

THE history of human progress shows that great movements frequently receive their initial impulse from the most visionary and impractical of men. Perhaps the very quality of being visionary — prone to see visions — makes possible a forecast of results which lack of practical ability in the individual could never accomplish. John Brown did as much as any man to give direction to public thought in favor of the emancipation movement in the United States, but a man less qualified than he to bring that movement to a successful issue could scarcely have been found. So with the vital question of the Northwest — the long-disputed Oregon Question — it was preached, published and kept before the public for many years by a man who proved himself wholly unfit to carry out his own schemes. This man was a Boston schoolmaster, Hall J. Kelley.

Scarcely had the grand enterprise of Mr. Astor upon the Columbia terminated in failure when Kelley in 1815 began his crusade. He read everything that he could find relating to Oregon, believed it all, however extravagant, and retailed it to the public with whatever addition his own over-wrought imagination might suggest. He published a great deal in current periodicals, circulated broadcast his pamphlets and tracts, and even obtained the ear of Congress in behalf of the Pacific empire whose fate, as he rightly considered, was even then trembling in the balance. What he wrote was for the most part grossly inaccurate; but with a public quite as ignorant as he, this was no drawback, but rather a positive advantage. Everything came from his pen clothed with the beauty of a western sunset. The fertile lands that could be had for the asking, the salubrious climate of that distant shore, the noble rivers with their living wealth of salmon, and finally the glorious empire which must be claimed before it should be too late, such were the themes that formed the burden of his perfervid utterances. The barren plains to be crossed in reaching this promised land, the savage foes to be encountered, the perennial rains of the Pacific, and the years of drudgery in winning a home from the wilderness — of these Kelley had nothing to say. His crusade was a successful one in helping to turn men's minds to a subject of far-reaching national importance, and in this respect the American people owe to his memory a debt of gratitude. Although he never achieved the distinction of martyrdom in the cause which he so boldly and persistently championed, he will stand in history as the John Brown of the movement which saved to the United States a part of its rightful domain upon the Pacific.

The practical talents in which Kelley was deficient, were met with in a marked degree in one of his townsmen and disciples, Nathaniel J. Wyeth.[1] Not that Wyeth was ultimately any more successful than Kelley — his schemes, like those of Astor, were foredoomed to failure. A mighty corporation with an empire at its back was more than any individual single-handed could contend against. But Wyeth understood the essential conditions of ordinary business success. He was a man of great energy, sound judgment, and unquestioned integrity, a good organizer, fearless of obstacles, singularly free from visionary projects, and on the whole one of the ablest men whom the fur trade brought to public notice. His project for establishing a trade on the Pacific coast, like that of Astor before him, was in itself eminently feasible; but the conditions were such that without great financial backing and some support from the government he could not get a start; and unfortunately he never enjoyed either of these advantages.

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[1] Nathaniel Jarvis Wyeth was born in Cambridge, Mass., January 29, 1802. His father, Jacob Wyeth, was a Harvard gradute. His mother, Elizabeth Jarvis Wyeth, was a member of the Jarvis family, owners of

The crusade of Hall J. Kelley found a ready response in the sympathetic and ambitious nature of Wyeth. The more he thought of the subject the more he came to believe that there was a great opening for business enterprise on the Pacific. His views developed very much on the same lines as those of Astor twenty years before, although of necessity

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Jarvis field, famous in the annals of Harvard athletics. Young Wyeth was fitted for college, but decided, much to his regret in later years, not to take the time to complete a course. Upon leaving school he succeeded his father for a short time in the management of a pleasure resort on the borders of Fresh Pond, but disliking the business, he entered the employ of Frederick Tudor who had just originated the ice industry of the United States, including not only the cutting and storing of ice, but its export to foreign countries. Wyeth remained in the business until his western expedition took place, and became general manager of the company. After his return from the mountains in 1836 he re-entered the business with Mr. Tudor. In 1840 he set up on his own account. He was very assiduous in his work and invented most of the appliances which have since been in common use in the ice business. He was also largely interested in other enterprises such as brick-making, nurseries, etc. He died August 31, 1856, on the spot where he was born and which had been his life-long home.

The data for this note were furnished by Mrs. Mary J. Fish, of Taunton, Mass., a niece of Wyeth.

upon a much more modest scale. His project, as it finally assumed definite form, was in brief to organize a trading company to do business in the valley of the Columbia and its tributaries. It is generally understood to have been conceived with a view of developing the salmon trade, but this was not the case with the first expedition. The specific character of the trade was left undetermined, " without positively settling the particular business" to be followed, as Wyeth frequently wrote in reply to inquiries. Again he said: " The company go out for trade in such branches as may be expedient"; but he adds that " probably the fur business will be selected." His plan was to supply his parties in the field, and ship his products to market, by ocean vessels sailing to and from the Columbia. He believed that he could reach the whole tramontane country in that way more cheaply than overland from St. Louis and he therefore hoped to get the carrying trade of other parties doing business there. One cannot fail to observe the similarity in general outline between Wyeth's idea and that of Astor before him; but it was probably independently worked out by Wyeth, for he rarely if ever refers in his letters to Astor's experiences either by way of warning or guidance.

The first expedition was planned to include about fifty persons among whom there should be " no families or other helpless people." The nature of the compact which was to bind the little company together is thus stated by Wyeth himself: " Our company is to last five years. The profits are to be divided in such a manner that if the number concerned is fifty, and the whole net profits were divided into that number of parts, I should get eight, the surgeon two, and the remaining forty parts would be divided among the remaining forty-eight persons. The eight parts which I take is consideration for my service as head of the concern and furnishing the requisite capital and credit for the business, and which is to be invested in goods to a small amount, to take with us by land, camp equipage, horses, wagons, etc., and in vessels and goods to be sent out to us, so as to arrive there within a few months afterward. Each man will be required to furnish his own equipment and pay his passage as far as Franklin, Missouri, which will amount to forty dollars, and the surplus to be paid for him from the capital if it amounts to more."[2]

Wyeth at first contemplated joining fortunes with Hall J. Kelley who was at this time actively engaged in organizing his Oregon Colonization Society. He always acknowledged his debt to Kelley in turning his thoughts to the distant regions of the Columbia; but he found, as soon as he seriously concluded to go to that country, that the disciple would have to cut loose from the master if he were to accomplish anything. His quick judgment told him that the schoolmaster's visionary ideas would bring disaster to the whole enterprise. Some of his letters to Kelley, who counted on his co-operation, are worth quoting. Thus he says in one of them: "When you adopted the plan of taking across the continent in the first expedition women and children I gave up hope that you would go at all, and all intention of going with you if you did"; and in another: "You very much mistake if you think I wish to desert your party, but you must recollect that the 1st of January last was set at first as the time of starting," and it was now the 1st of March with no visible preparations yet, on Kelley's part. Wyeth, on the other hand, believed in keeping his appointments even if made only with himself. He had fixed on the 1st of March, 1832, as the approximate date of starting and he intended to start then. He did in fact leave Boston on the 10th of that month although he had secured a party of only twenty men.

Wyeth says little in detail of the makeup of his expedition, but some light upon it from a not very friendly source is furnished in a little book[3] published by a kinsman, John

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[2] *Sources of the History of Oregon*, p. 20.

[3] *A Short Story of a Long Journey*. This is a racy and sarcastic narrative of what the writer saw of the expedition. He had become disgusted with the enterprise and was not strictly impartial as an historian.

B. Wyeth, who accompanied the expedition to Pierre's Hole and then abandoned it. The party were at first required to wear a uniform consisting of a "coarse woolen jacket and pantaloons, a striped cotton shirt and cowhide boots. Every man had a musket, most of them rifles, all of them bayonets in a broad belt, together with a large clasp knife for eating and common purposes." A bugle was also provided for signaling. For crossing streams which were too deep to ford, the wagon boxes were carefully caulked and fitted for quick conversion into boats. The sight of this unusual contrivance excited the risibilities of the Cambridge students who poked no end of fun at it, and finally gave to the amphibious monster a scientific name of suitable length and dignity by calling it a *Nat-Wyethium*. All of these superfluous features of the outfit quickly disappeared before the rough experiences of the trip, and no one was more prompt to discard them than Wyeth himself as soon as he came in contact with the true conditions of the journey.

To carry out the maritime part of the program Wyeth secured the financial co-operation of the firm of Henry Hall and Tucker and Williams who provided the means for chartering and loading a small vessel, the *Sultana*, Captain Lambert, which was sent to the mouth of the Columbia by way of Cape Horn.

Wyeth himself left Boston with a party of twenty men and took sail to Baltimore. In that city he received four recruits. The strength of his party when he reached St. Louis was therefore twenty-four men. At St. Louis he came in contact with the veterans of the fur trade and for the first time understood how wide was their range of experience and how firmly they were established in the business which he was about to enter. McKenzie was down from Fort Union and Sublette was getting ready his mountain expedition. The contrast between their thorough knowl-

Wyeth himself characterized the book as full of "white lies"; misleading and unfair, but not maliciously false as were some of his other critics in the public prints. The little book is well worth perusal.

edge of the mountain business and the raw inexperience of Wyeth's little company was not intended to strengthen their confidence or enthusiasm in the success of the undertaking. Evidences of disaffection already began to show themselves, although not to such an extent but that the entire party proceeded on the journey as soon as the necessary preparations could be made at St. Louis. In less than a week they embarked on the steamboat *Otter* en route for the frontier rendezvous at Independence, leaving behind the boat-wagons which Wyeth sold at half-price when he learned that pack animals were almost exclusively used on the Oregon Trail. In due time most of the party arrived at Independence. Three, however, had deserted on the way up, and three more left soon afterward — a loss of one-fourth of a party which was less than half its intended strength to start with.

The little band remained upwards of two weeks at Independence getting ready for the forward movement. Here their inexperience and lack of suitable equipment were more than ever apparent and general discouragement might have caused the abandonment of the enterprise then and there, but for the timely arrival of William L. Sublette and his mountain expedition from St. Louis. With his perfect knowledge of conditions in the mountains Sublette saw that he had nothing to fear from this new company and might very likely draw all the men and the outfit into his own business before he got through with them. He therefore lent them a ready hand, set them on their feet, and offered them the protection of his own party as far as he should go. To the more timid this unexpected assistance seemed providential and they gave it an exaggerated importance which we may be sure that Wyeth did not. Says young John B. Wyeth: "To me it seems that we must have perished for want of sustenance in the deserts of the Missouri had we been by ourselves . . . and but for him we should probably never have reached the American Alps. By this time every man had begun to think for himself."

Under Sublette's pilotage Wyeth and his eighteen companions set out from Independence May 12th, crossed the plains, and without any notable incident reached the annual rendezvous of the traders in Pierre's Hole on July 8th. Here they found one of those unique and motley gatherings which could be seen only for a few years before and after 1830, a heterogeneous mixture of savages and white men of many and various descriptions. There were present about two hundred lodges of Indians, ninety trappers of the American Fur Company, one hundred of the Rocky Mountain Fur Company, besides Wyeth's party and many free trappers. It was doubtless a strange and not very inviting spectacle to the men of far-off New England who had probably never seen a wild Indian before in their lives.

The party were now on Columbian waters. Sublette had accompanied them as far as he could. They must go the rest of the way alone. The situation was altogether serious to many of them, and young Wyeth's account of what transpired before the next important move took place, is so naively told as to justify its verbatim reproduction here. "We had been dissatisfied for some time, but we had not had leisure to communicate it, and systematize our grievances. Myself and some others requested Captain Wyeth to call a meeting of his followers, to ask information, and to know what we were to expect. . . . We wished to have what we had been used to at home— a town meeting — or a parish meeting, where every freeman has a right to speak his sentiments, and to vote thereon. But Captain Wyeth was by no means inclined to this democratical procedure. The most he seemed inclined to was a caucus with a select few, of which number neither his own brother, though older than himself, nor myself was to be included. After considerable altercation he concluded to call a meeting of the whole, on business interesting and applicable to all. We accordingly met, Captain Wyeth in the chair, or on the stump, I forget which. Instead of every man speaking his own mind, the Captain commenced the business by ordering the roll to be called; and as the names were called the clerk asked the person if he would go on. The first name was Nathaniel J. Wyeth, whom we had dubbed Captain, who answered 'I shall go on.' The next was William Nud, who, before he answered, wished to know what the Captain's plan and intentions were, whether to try to commence a small colony or to trap and trade for beaver. To which Captain Wyeth replied that *that* was none of our business. Then Mr. Nud said: 'I shall not go on;' and as the names of the rest were called there appeared seven persons out of the twenty-one who were determined to return home."

The total number who finally left Captain Wyeth was seven, leaving eleven who adhered to the enterprise. Wyeth gave up one of his two tents to the returning party and the two factions pitched their camps about half a mile apart.

It is impossible not to admire the Napoleonic spirit of Captain Wyeth on this occasion. It was not, in his opinion, a time for democratic debates, but for action. He wanted the true and untrue separated from each other that he might know exactly where he stood. For that purpose one question was enough: "Will you go or return?" No amount of conciliatory debate would have settled the question more effectually.

Wyeth now attached himself, for protection until beyond the range of the Blackfeet, to M. G. Sublette's party who were going off to the westward and southwestward to trap. The dissenters attached themselves to the returning party of William L. Sublette. M. G. Sublette's party set out on the 17th of July, but went only a short distance that day. On the following morning they met a party of Blackfeet about eight miles from rendezvous and brought on the celebrated battle of Pierre's Hole.[4] This affair delayed M. G. Sublette and Wyeth three days, and W. L. Sublette, who had been wounded in the fight, twelve days. The seven returning Wyethians becoming impatient set out on the 25th of July with Alfred K. Stephens and a party of four men, but while in the vicinity of Jackson Hole on the following day, they were attacked by the Blackfeet. One of their number, More, and a man named Foy, were killed on the spot, and Stephens was fatally wounded. No other adventure of importance occurred on the way back, and that part of the Wyeth expedition reached home in safety, wiser, if not wealthier, than when they started.

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[4] See Part IV., Chapter II.

On the 24th of July Wyeth and Milton Sublette again set out on their journey. They went south across Snake river and then took a southwesterly direction to the Portneuf river, and thence to the Snake near the American Falls where they arrived on the 13th of August. Their further course for many weeks lay among the streams that empty into the Snake river from the south, where Wyeth tried his hand at trapping, with a view, no doubt, of getting some experience in that business. He was moderately successful but he was compelled to cache the furs he gathered, for his party was too small to transport them. On the 29th of August Wyeth parted company with Sublette, not without sincere regret.[5] It is quite impossible to follow him closely in his wanderings in the valley of Snake river, for he makes use of almost no geographical names. His men were often short of provisions, as have been all parties traveling in that desolate region. On the 28th of September the party unexpectedly ran across Sublette and Fraeb nearly opposite the mouth of the Boise, but Wyeth, who was away from camp, did not see them. Finally, after much trouble in securing a guide they succeeded in traversing the Blue mountains and arrived at the Hudson Bay Company's post at the mouth of the Walla Walla river October 14th at five o'clock P. M.

At the hands of Mr. Pambrun, who was in charge of the post, as from all the other agents of the Hudson Bay Company, Wyeth received the most lavish hospitality and uniform kindness. However much he may have felt cause to complain of their influence in ruining his own schemes, he never failed to acknowledge his deep debt to them for their generosity in the many hours of distress which he experienced while in their country.

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[5] "This party have treated us with great kindness which I shall long remember." *Sources of the History of Oregon*, p. 165.

Wyeth took leave of Fort Walla Walla October 19th and reached Fort Vancouver on the morning of the 29th, and a week later he made a visit to Fort George and the mouth of the Columbia. Either at Vancouver or George he learned that his ship had been wrecked at the Society Islands and that this part of his program had ended in disaster. Upon his return to Vancouver November 19th, the men unanimously asked for their discharge, as it was patent to all of them that the expedition was a failure and that they would have to shift for themselves. Wyeth could not of course refuse, and the little band here dissolved the compact under which they had made the first continuous journey on record from Boston to the mouth of the Columbia. "They were good men," is Wyeth's brief comment in his journal, "and persevered as long as perseverance would do any good. I am now afloat on the great sea of life without stay or support."[6]

Wyeth spent the winter with his hospitable entertainers at Fort Vancouver except for an excursion which he made up the Willamette river. He accomplished nothing further than to add to his stock of information. On the 3rd of February, 1833, he set out for the East in company with Mr. Ermatinger of the Hudson Bay Company who was bound for the post among the Flathead Indians. They ascended the Columbia to Fort Walla Walla, then struck out northeast for Spokane House, at that time abandoned and in ruins, from which point they made a side trip to Fort Colville. From Spokane they made their way into the

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[6] Wyeth left Boston with twenty men besides himself He secured four more at Baltimore. Before he left Independence six deserted. At Pierre's Hole seven turned back. Wyeth and eleven men went on. At Vancouver two died, five went home by sea, two remained in the country and two started back east with Wyeth in the spring of 1833. Of these two one was discharged in the Flathead country and the other apparently completed the journey home.

Flathead country, arriving at the company's fort there on the 7th of April. From this point Wyeth made a tortuous journey south, passing across the Divide to the sources of the Missouri, thence back to the sources of the Salmon river and thence into the valley of the Godin river and the plains of Snake river where he could see the Three Buttes to the south and the Three Tetons far to the southeast. Here he fell in with Bonneville's clerk, Hodgkiss, and through him wrote to the Captain under date of June 22, making a proposition for a joint hunt in the country south of the Columbia as far as to the vicinity of the Spanish settlements in California. Captain Bonneville accepted this proposition and it was arranged that Wyeth should lead the party. Wyeth joined Bonneville on the 2nd of July at a point about eighteen miles east of Henry river and the two remained in camp here for the next five days. Wyeth employed the 4th of July in writing numerous letters to parties in the East in all of which he mentions his arrangement with Bonneville for the next year's hunt and his intention to go to California. It was a cold, disagreeable day, yet the indefatigable Wyeth penned no fewer than seven long letters which together make up eight pages of fine print as they have recently been given to the world. He presumably wrote also the copy in his letter-book. It was not a very cheerful outlook to the brave New Englander, there on the bleak desert, spending the natal day of his beloved country.[7] But he was true game and although he confessed that reflections upon his situation now and then gave him the "blue devils," he never relaxed for a moment his energy and determination to succeed.

But either on the 4th or the following day a complete change, of which we have not the slightest explanation, came over Wyeth's plans. He gave up his arrangement with Bonneville and decided to go directly home. The letters written the day before, which he was to have sent by Mr. Cerré, were now unnecessary, and "not sent" is written across the face of each in the letter-book. Although Wyeth says that he had furs enough in various caches through the mountains to pay his expenses thus far, still he does not seem to have collected them, but started immediately for home, going by way of the annual rendezvous at the head of Green river. He set out on the 7th of July, passed the battle ground of Pierre's Hole on the 10th, crossed Snake river the next day, passed the spot where one of his men was killed by the Blackfeet the year before, and reached Green river at Bonneville's fort on the 15th. Here the great gathering of the mountain parties was already assembled,[8] and here Wyeth received his first letters from home.

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[7] "I hope that today you are better off than myself. I hope you are in peace of mind and content, enjoying with your friends and family the festivities of the day, and I hope you have a thought, too, of me. Imagine to yourself a fellow seated on the open and extensive prairie beside a little brook, without fire in freezing weather, and poorly clad in skins with plenty of poor raw dried buffalo meat, and you see Nat." *Sources of the History of Oregon*, p. 65.

The rendezvous broke up about the 25th of July and the various parties set out via South Pass for the Bighorn river where they intended to ship their cargoes for St. Louis. Wyeth's trip in a bullboat from the head of navigation on the Bighorn to Fort Union at the mouth of the Yellowstone was full of incident and has given Irving an opportunity for one of the best passages in his *Captain Bonneville*. In particular the completeness with which Wyeth took the conceit out of his hunters who professed a keen contempt for the raw Easterner, and repeatedly excelled them in their own craft, gave evident satisfaction to the genial author. Wyeth spent August 12th to 16th making his bullboat, a few miles above the Little Bighorn. While here he entered into a contract, August 14th, with Milton Sublette, on behalf of the Rocky Mountain Fur Company, giving a bond for its faithful performance, to bring out next year before a stated time three thousand dollars' worth of merchandise required by the company for the prosecution of their trade the following year.

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[8] "Found here collected Captain Walker, Bonneville, Cerry of one Co., Drips and Fontenelle of the American Fur Co., Mr. Campbell just from St. Louis, Messrs. Fitzpatrick, Gervais, Milton Sublette of R. M. F. Co., and in all the companies about three hundred whites and a small village of Snakes." *Sources of the History of Oregon*, p. 205.

Wyeth set out in his bullboat on the 16th of August, arriving at Fort Cass on the following day, and at Fort Union on the 24th where they were entertained for the next three days by McKenzie[9] "with all possible politeness and hospitality." Meanwhile Wyeth took careful note of the fort which he considered to have been "better furnished than any British fort" which he had seen. Naturally he did not fail to record his enjoyment of such luxuries as milk, flour, bread, bacon, cheese, and butter. He also noted that they used coal and burned lime, and he records with ominous import, when read in the light of later events, that "they are beginning to distill spirits from corn traded from the Indians below, owing to some restriction on the introduction of the article into the country." At Union Wyeth found the identical powder flask that belonged to More who was killed by the Blackfeet the year before. It had been brought in and traded by the Indians.

Wyeth left the fort at 10:30 A. M. on August 27th in company with Milton Sublette. Just as they were going into camp for the night they met William L. Sublette who had been establishing opposition posts along the river and was now about to erect one near Fort Union. Here Milton concluded to remain with his brother, and Wyeth was therefore left without any one who had ever descended the river before. His only comment upon the situation was: *"I can go down stream,"* and down he started the next morning. He passed the Mandans September 2nd, Fort Pierre on the 8th, Council Bluffs on the 21st, Leavenworth on the 27th, St. Louis October 9th and reached Cambridge November 7th. In passing Leavenworth he reported to the government authorities the fact that McKenzie was running a whiskey distillery at Fort Union.

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[9] McKenzie's opinion of Wyeth — "a man of many schemes and considerable talent."

With as much energy and enthusiasm as if his last year's venture had been a brilliant success instead of a total failure, Wyeth began, on the very day of his return, preparations for a repetition of his experiment. His report of operations to Messrs. Henry Hall, Tucker and Williams, and his various letters written at this time, furnish some of the most authentic data now extant upon the fur trade of that period. No better proof could be found of Wyeth's ability and energy than the fact that in spite of his failure thus far he was able to enlist his financial associates in a second and more extensive enterprise. His contract with M. G. Sublette gave him a substantial *point d'appui* in arranging for means to launch his new expedition. He counted upon it as a starting point in opening up a carrying trade for parties doing business in the mountains. He had observed so carefully everything connected with the trade that his minute familiarity with it all astonished his friends and despite his lack of success they resolved to give him one more trial. A company was formed under the name of the Columbia River Fishing and Trading Company. Another ship, the *May Dacre,* was outfitted to go round by sea. Milton Sublette came on to Boston during the winter and with him Wyeth made arrangements to fill his contract for the ensuing season. A further evidence of the versatility of Wyeth's ambition is seen in the fact that he found time amid the rush of his business to learn how to take latitude and longitude and carried with him the instruments for making observations.

Having made all the necessary arrangements Wyeth left Boston on his second expedition February 7th, 1834, and arrived at St. Louis March 9th where he organized a company of seventy men, intending to cross the plains with the parties going to the annual rendezvous. He left St. Louis on the 3rd of April and arrived at Independence in due time with all of his party and goods. Here he complains that "the opposition of the four companies have made me pay a heavy advance on men and high prices for horses." But Wyeth was now a veteran with the rest of them and he was able to report to his financial sponsors that "everything is favorable except that the expense will be greater than has been calculated."

His present expedition was honored by the presence of some distinguished travelers. There were two scientists, Thomas Nuttall and J. K. Townsend, and several missionaries under the leadership of Jason and Daniel Lee. Referring to the latter in a letter dated April 17th, Wyeth says: "There are none of the dignitaries with me yet, and if they preach much longer in the States they will lose their passage, for I will not wait a minute for them." They did, however, arrive in time and the united parties set out on their long journey on the 28th of April, 1834.

On the 8th of May Milton G. Sublette was compelled to abandon the expedition on account of sickness. On the 12th William L. Sublette with his expedition passed Wyeth. These two events, unimportant in themselves, had deep meaning for Wyeth, who already, no doubt, began to fear the machinations of the elder Sublette and to suspect that with both Milton and himself absent from rendezvous when Sublette arrived his own interests would receive scant consideration. He sent a letter by Sublette to Fitzpatrick notifying him of his early approach with goods in compliance with his contract.

The journey across the plains was a pleasant and successful one. On the 1st of June the party crossed Laramie river and found some of Sublette's men engaged in building a post there, the first ever erected in that locality, where later stood the most important military fort of the plains. Independence Rock was passed on the morning of the 9th and from an inscription left by Sublette it was learned that he had passed there three days before. This day Wyeth sent an express to Fitzpatrick notifying him of his near approach. South Pass was crossed June 14th and the party proceeded by rapid marches down the Big Sandy. The following entry in Wyeth's journal for June 19th describes the close of his journey to the rendezvous: "On the night of the 17th I left camp to hunt Fitzpatrick and slept on the prairie. In the morning struck Green river and went down to the forks and finding nothing went up again and found rendezvous about twelve miles up, and much to my astonishment the goods which I had contracted to bring up to the Rocky Mountain Fur Company were refused by those honorable gentlemen. Latitude 41 degrees 30 minutes."

Thus Wyeth's worst fears were realized. The merchandise which he had transported across the prairie was refused. The absence of Milton G. Sublette and the early arrival at rendezvous of William L. had enabled the latter to induce the Rocky Mountain Fur Company to refuse to stand by the contract. In fact affairs in the mountains had taken on a dismal aspect. Between mutual quarrelings and attacks by the Indians none of the companies had made more than enough to pay off their men. The Rocky Mountain Fur Company was on the point of dissolution, and was dissolved on the 20th of June, and the new firm of Fitzpatrick, Sublette and Bridger was formed. These gloomy prospects no doubt had their weight with Fitzpatrick, of whom Wyeth thus writes to Milton Sublette under date of July 1st: "I do not accuse you or him of any intention of injuring me in this manner when you made the contract, but I think he has been bribed to sacrifice my interests by better offers from your brother."

As for Wyeth the most he received was an advance of five hundred dollars which he had made to Milton G. Sublette at Independence, and the "forfeit," whatever that might have been, which the Rocky Mountain Fur Company was obligated to pay; but they refused "even to pay the interest on cash advances for there is no law here." Wyeth was highly indignant at this thoroughly dishonest treatment and he is said to have told Fitzpatrick and Sublette that he would yet "roll a stone into their garden which they would never be able to get out." His first movement was a practical fulfillment of his threat. Finding himself encumbered with a quantity of goods which he had expected to be rid of at Green river, some new arrangement became immediately necessary. With characteristic promptness Wyeth decided to build a fort as soon as he should reach Snake river, and leave there a trader with his surplus goods. With 126 horses, forty-one men and his outfit of merchandise he left camp on Ham's Fork [10] July 3rd, and set out for Snake river. The 4th of July he spent in camp on Twin creek, a branch of Bear river, where he gave the men a celebration,[11] in company with Cerré and Walker, who were going east with Bonneville's returns. Wyeth reached the Soda Springs on Bear river July 8th and then started across the country for Snake river. On the 10th he passed Bonneville who was exerting himself to keep out of his way. He reached Snake river on the 14th and selected a site for his post the next day. Its erection was commenced on the 16th and by the 5th of August was so far progressed that Wyeth felt that he could proceed on his journey. His entry in his diary for August 6th is: "Having done as much as was requisite for safety to the fort and drank a bale of liquor and named it Fort Hall [12] in honor of the oldest partner of our concern, we left it and with it Mr. Evans in charge of eleven men and fourteen horses and mules and three cows." This was the stone which Wyeth rolled into the garden of the mountain traders and which they never succeeded in rolling out.

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[10] There is no little confusion as to the precise location of this year's rendezvous, but from Wyeth's journal it seems to have been about 12 miles above the mouth of the Big Sandy in the valley of Green river. The parties, however, did not remain here but moved over to Ham's Fork, a short day's march, on the 19th. It was here that all of Wyeth's correspondence at this time was dated, and here were signed the contracts for the dissolution of the Rocky Mountain Fur Company and the organization of its successor.

[11] "I gave the men too much alcohol for peace and took a pretty hearty spree myself." Wyeth's Journal.

[12] "Since mine of June 21st from Ham's Fork I have, as I then proposed, built a fort on Snake or Lewis river in Lat. 43 deg. 14 min. N. and Long. 113 deg. 30 min. W. which I named Fort Hall in honor of the oldest gentleman in the concern. We manufactured a magnificent flag from some unbleached sheeting, a little red flannel and a few blue

Wyeth having crossed the Snake river made his way over the lava plain to the Boise river and down that stream to the Snake which he forded on the 23rd of August. He arrived at the Grande Ronde August 31st and found Captain Bonneville there. Resuming his route he reached Fort Walla Walla September 2nd and Fort Vancouver on the 14th of that month. The next day the brig *May Dacre* arrived and Wyeth learned that she had been struck by lightning on her way out and had been compelled to put into Valparaiso for repairs at a loss of three months' time. This made her too late for the fishing season and thus another move in Wyeth's combination had failed. The vessel was retained till winter and was sent to the Sandwich Islands with a load of "timber and card" returning in the spring with cattle, sheep, goats, hogs, etc.

During the autumn and winter Wyeth pushed his business with almost incredible energy. He personally explored the Willamette valley as far as to the falls of that river. He sent Captain Thing of the *May Dacre* with eight of his men and thirteen Sandwich Islanders to Fort Hall with an outfit of supplies. He himself conducted an extensive trapping expedition along the Des Chutes river going as far as its sources in central Oregon. While on this expedition he was on the lookout for some deserters whom he supposed to have gone in that direction. He also established a trading post on Wappatoo Island near the mouth of the Willamette,

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patches; saluted it with damaged powder and wet it in villainous alcohol, and after all it makes, I do assure you, a very respectable appearance among the dry and desolate regions of central America. Its bastions stand a terror to the skulking Indian and a beacon of safety to the fugitive hunter. It is manned by 12 men and has constantly loaded in the bastions 100 guns and rifles. These bastions command both the inside and outside of the fort." Wyeth to Leonard Jarvis dated Columbia river October 6, 1834. Wyeth's second post was Fort William on Wappatoo Island. He contemplated building a third near Great Salt Lake.

which he named Fort William, presumably for another member of the Boston firm of Henry Hall and Tucker and Williams.[13]

Wyeth's indomitable pluck won for him the admiration of every one and particularly of the philanthropic Hudson Bay Company factor at Fort Vancouver, the venerable Dr. John McLoughlin. These two men formed an earnest and lasting attachment for each other with which the necessities of business competition were never permitted to interfere.

But in spite of Wyeth's herculean efforts his business did not prosper. His British friends, though kind and hospitable to a degree, could not, of course, aid him in his schemes of commercial rivalry, and gradually, yet surely, he saw the fabric of his hopes crumble to ruin. The salmon business did not develop as was expected. Fourteen of his men were lost within a year by drowning or at the hands of the Indians. All the rest had suffered much from sickness, and Wyeth himself, after almost incredible sufferings, was seized with bilious fever late in the summer of 1835 and very nearly perished. His situation at the time may best be told in the words of a friendly eye witness. Townsend the naturalist in his journal of July 11, 1835, says: "It really seems that the 'Columbia River Fishing and Trading Company' is devoted to destruction; disasters meet them at every turn, and as yet none of their schemes have prospered. This has not been for want of energy or exertion. Captain Wyeth has pursued the plans which to him seemed best adapted for ensuring success, with the most indefatigable perseverance and industry, and has endured hardships without murmuring which would have prostrated many a more robust man. Nevertheless he has not succeeded."

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[13] To Wyeth's great astonishment, upon his return to Vancouver from this expedition he found Hall J. Kelley, who had at length reached the land of his long years of dreaming. But he had arrived forlorn and discredited, having come up from California by land, and, it was said, having been a party to a theft of horses. On this account, says Wyeth, he "is not received at the fort as a gentleman. A house is given him and food is sent him from the governor's table but he is not suffered to mess here."

Farnham in his *Travels in the Western Prairies* likewise speaks enthusiastically of Wyeth's management. "From what I saw and heard of Wyeth's management in Oregon I was impressed with the belief that he was, beyond comparison, the most talented business man from the States that ever established himself in the territory." But, according to this same authority, the causes of his failure were not hard to find. "In pursuance of the avowed doctrine of that company [the Hudson Bay] that no others have a right to trade in furs beyond the Rocky mountains, whilst the use of capital and their incomparable skill and perseverance can prevent it, they established a fort near him [referring here to Fort Hall], preceded him, followed him, surrounded him everywhere and cut the throat of his prosperity with such kindness and politeness that Wyeth was induced to sell his whole interest, existent and prospective, in Oregon, to his generous, but too indefatigable, skilful and powerful antagonist."

In language almost pathetic Wyeth himself, on one occasion where his misfortunes had gotten the better of his feelings, thus unbosoms himself in a letter to his uncle, Leonard Jarvis: "I am surrounded with difficulties beyond any former period of my life and without the health and spirit to support them. In this situation you can judge if memory brings to me the warnings of those wiser and older who advised a course which would at least have resulted in quietness. Yes, memory lends its powers for torment. A few days ago she told a tale which carried me back to early life, led me through the varying shades of days and years, while at every step the tale grew darker and at last delivered me to the horrors of the present time. What at that moment they were you may imagine — a business scattered over half the deserts of the earth, and myself a powerless lump of matter in the extremity of mortal pain with little hope of surviving a day; and if it could have been said, 'he never existed,' glad to go down with that sun."

Having now given up all hope of successfully continuing the business Wyeth turned his thoughts to the matter of closing it out as advantageously as possible. He went to Fort Hall in the fall of 1835 and remained there during the winter. Returning to Fort William in the spring he placed it in charge of a Mr. C. M. Walker with directions to lease it for fifteen years if he could, and then went back to Fort Hall where he arrived on the 18th of June. A week later he left for the east by way of Taos and the Arkansas river and reached home early in the autumn of 1836. In the following year Fort Hall and all its appurtenances were sold to the Hudson Bay Company. Fort William was not disposed of, and Wyeth's possession of the island became the foundation of a claim for it at a later date under United States laws.

Thus ended in failure, but not dishonor, one of the celebrated enterprises of the American Fur Trade. The causes of its failure are plainly apparent, and may all be summed up in want of adequate preparation, and in the apathy of the United States government to its true interests on the Pacific. Wyeth's enterprise was not unlike Astor's, but was undertaken at a time when the great company which had worsted Astor was firmly established in all the valley of the Columbia. If the unlimited resources of Mr. Astor could not succeed where he had at least an even chance with his rivals, how little could Wyeth expect success against the same rivals now firmly established and for twenty years in possession of the country. Nothing could have prevented his failure except heavy financial backing which could have held out through months and perhaps years of preliminary failure. This backing Wyeth did not have. "The business I am in must be closed," he wrote to his old partner in the ice business, "not that it might not be made a good one, but that those who are now engaged in it are not the men to make it so. The smallest loss makes them 'fly the handle' and such men can rarely succeed in a new business." It was no dishonor to Wyeth that he failed. His plans were in themselves well conceived, no less so than those of Astor, but success in both cases unfortunately depended upon questions of an international character over which private individuals had no control.[14]

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[14] Wyeth's journal and letter books, which were kept with extraordinary fullness and regularity, even amid the difficulties of his long overland journeys, are an invaluable store of information concerning the fur trade between 1830 and 1840. They have recently been published by the Historical Society of Oregon under the title of *Sources of the History of Oregon*. It is interesting to know that Irving had access to these documents during his preparation of the history of Captain Bonneville's adventures.

CHAPTER XXVI.

THE OREGON TRAIL.

The Astorians and the Oregon Trail — Work of the Rocky Mountain Fur Company — Recovery of the old line — The Trail a national road — Its character as a highway — Impression upon the Indians — The Trail as a memorial — Reoccupation of the Trail — Itinerary of the Trail — Independence and Westport — Brady Island — Scott's Bluffs — Laramie river — Sweetwater river — Independence Rock — The Devil's Gate — South Pass — Fort Bridger — Sublette's Cutoff — Soda Springs — Portneuf river — Fort Hall — Fort Boise — The Grande Ronde — The Columbia river — Fort Vancouver.

THE course of our narrative thus far has indicated pretty definitely the development of a general route of travel across the plains and over the Rocky mountains. The goings and comings of the trappers and traders had gradually connected the more feasible crossings of the mountains and deserts until by 1843 there was a well-defined continuous route from the Missouri river at the mouth of the Kansas to the Pacific ocean at the mouth of the Columbia. It is known in Western history as the Oregon Trail.

The history of the Oregon Trail begins with the Astorian expeditions of 1811-1813. In their outward journey Hunt and Crooks followed the line of the Trail approximately from the mouth of the Portneuf where Fort Hall later stood to the mouth of the Columbia. Stuart and Crooks, on their return journey, after reaching the mouth of the Portneuf, followed the subsequent route across to Bear river and up this stream to the mouth of Thompson Fork. At this point they left the river and made their wide and senseless detour to the north in order to get back to Hunt's outgoing route of the previous year. They again touched the Trail a few *miles west of South Pass, but instead of turning* east into the pass, they went some distance south and then turned east, paralleling the Trail for about one hundred miles. Finally turning north they came again on the Trail in the Sweetwater valley at no great distance above the Devil's Gate. From this point eastward to Grand Island in the valley of the Platte they were on the line of the Trail; but they continued down the Platte to the Missouri, whereas the Trail, as it later developed, crossed the country from Grand Island to the mouth of the Kansas. The Astorians thus traveled, on their two expeditions, nearly the whole course of the Oregon Trail. They also published an account of their journey in which they pronounced the route entirely practicable, even for wagons.[1]

The next step in the development of the Trail may be traced to the parties of General Ashley. South Pass was discovered, probably in the fall of 1823, and certainly not later than 1824. The line of the Sweetwater valley was opened up at the same time, as was also the route from South Pass to Bear river. In 1826 Jedediah S. Smith connected this route with Southern California by another extending from Great Salt Lake to the Colorado river and thence across the Mojave desert to the Spanish settlements. In the following year he opened the route between San Francisco and Great Salt Lake across the Sierra Nevada mountains. Between 1832 and 1836 the parties of Bonneville and Wyeth passed repeatedly over all parts of the Trail, while Walker crossed from Great Salt Lake to the Pacific. The portion of the route between Independence, Mo., and Grand Island on the Platte came into use at an early day, but there is no record as to when or by whom it was opened up. While Independence was the usual starting place, parties frequently left the Missouri at Fort Leavenworth, St. Joseph, and Council Bluffs.

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[1] In a strict sense the Oregon Trail, and all the other early routes of travel, were opened up by the Indians to whom they had been known from time immemorial. These people did simply what any other people would do, what even the wild beasts do, they crossed the country by those routes which offered the fewest obstacles to travel. And so it came about that all these early routes of travel, which became so prominent in later times, were occupied by Indian trails when the white man first passed along them.

At the period with which this sketch closes, the Oregon Trail existed in its simple primary condition without any of the modification of later times. As travel increased with the inflow of emigrants numerous short-cuts were introduced here and there, while in some places the road became so worn that new locations were necessary, and thus from one cause or another there came to be several parallel lines over many portions of the route. Sometimes they were but a few hundred feet from each other; and again they were separated by many miles of distance and occasionally by rivers and mountains. In 1843 none of these modifications had been made, and the route as here given is the original line as it first came into general use. There are fortunately several good descriptions of the Trail dating from about this time. Fremont began his explorations in 1842. Joel Palmer has left a minute distance table and description of the route as he saw it in 1845. Major Howard Stansbury made an official report upon it from his exploration in 1849 as far as Salt Lake valley. The data for recovering the Trail within approximate limits are therefore ample.

We say "approximate limits" advisedly, for it would be indeed a difficult matter to lay down the old line with minute precision. The changes wrought by the settlement of the country have been too great. The land surveys with their rectangular divisions have forced the highways out of their natural course and in many places the old road has long since been plowed up and turned into cultivated ground. The advent of railroads wrought an immense change in the location of names. Although many of the old Trail names survive, the towns which they denote are rarely located where the names used to apply. They have probably gone to the nearest railway station which may be several miles away. From causes like these the old Trail has become totally obliterated and its precise location lost over most of that portion between Independence on the Missouri and Grand Island on the Platte. Over the rest of the route with few exceptions the location is precisely known, for it lay in river valleys and along streams most of the way. In some places the old road is still visible.

This wonderful highway was in the broadest sense a national road, although not surveyed or built under the auspices of the government. It was the route of a national movement — the migration of a people seeking to avail itself of opportunities which have come but rarely in the history of the world, and which will never come again. It was a route, every mile of which has been the scene of hardship and suffering, yet of high purpose and stern determination. Only on the steppes of Siberia can so long a highway be found over which traffic has moved by a continuous journey from one end to the other. Even in Siberia there are occasional settlements along the route, but on the Oregon Trail in 1843 the traveler saw no evidence of civilized habitation except four trading posts, between Independence and Fort Vancouver.

As a highway of travel the Oregon Trail is the most remarkable known to history. Considering the fact that it originated with the spontaneous use of travelers; that no transit ever located a foot of it; that no level established its grades; that no engineer sought out the fords or built any bridges or surveyed the mountain passes; that there was no grading to speak of nor any attempt at metalling the road-bed; and the general good quality of this two thousand miles of highway will seem most extraordinary. Father De Smet, who was born in Belgium, the home of good roads, pronounced the Oregon Trail one of the finest highways in the world. At the proper season of the year this was undoubtedly true. Before the prairies became too dry, the natural turf formed the best roadway for horses to travel on that has probably ever been known. It was amply hard to sustain traffic, yet soft enough to be easier to the feet than even the most perfect asphalt pavement. Over such roads, winding ribbon-like through the verdant prairies, amid the profusion of spring flowers, with grass so plentiful that the animals reveled in its abundance, and game everywhere greeted the hunter's rifle, and finally, with pure water in the streams, the traveler sped his way with a feeling of joy and exhilaration. But not so when the prairies became dry and parched, the road filled with stifling dust, the stream-beds mere dry ravines, or carrying only alkaline water which could not be used, the game all gone to more hospitable sections, and the summer sun pouring down its heat with torrid intensity. It was then that the Trail became a highway of desolation, strewn with abandoned property, the skeletons of horses, mules, and oxen, and, alas! too often, with freshly-made mounds and head-boards that told the pitiful tale of sufferings too great to be endured. If the Trail was the scene of romance, adventure, pleasure, and excitement, so it was marked in every mile of its course by human misery, tragedy, and death.

The immense travel which in later years passed over the Trail carved it into a deep furrow, often with several parallel tracks making a total width of a hundred feet or more. It was an astonishing spectacle even to white men when seen for the first time. Captain Raynolds, of the Corps of Engineers, United States Army, tells a good story on himself in this connection. In the fall of 1859 he came south from the Yellowstone river along the eastern base of the Bighorn mountains and struck the Trail somewhere above the first ford of the North Platte. Before reaching it he innocently asked his guide, Bridger, if there was any danger of their crossing the Trail *without seeing it!* Bridger answered him with only a look of contemptuous amazement.

It may be easily imagined how great an impression the sight of this road must have made upon the minds of the Indians. Father De Smet has recorded some interesting observations upon this point. In 1851 he traveled in company with a large number of Indians from the Missouri and Yellowstone rivers to Fort Laramie, where a great council was held in that year to form treaties with the several tribes. Most of these Indians had not been in that section before, and were quite unprepared for what they saw. "Our Indian companions," says Father De Smet, "who had never seen but the narrow hunting-paths by which they transport themselves and their lodges, were filled with admiration on seeing this noble highway, which is as smooth as a barn floor swept by the winds, and not a blade of grass can shoot up on it on account of the continual passing. They conceived a high idea of the countless *White Nation,* as they express it. They fancied that all had gone over that road, and that an immense void must exist in the land of the rising sun. Their countenances testified evident incredulity when I told them that their exit was in nowise perceived in the *land of the whites.* They styled the route the *Great Medicine Road of the Whites.*"

Over much of its length the Trail is now abandoned, but in many places it is not yet effaced from the soil, and may not be for centuries. There are few more impressive sights than portions of this old highway today. It still lies there upon the prairie, deserted by the traveler, an everlasting memorial of the human tide which once filled it to overflowing. Nature herself has helped to perpetuate this memorial, for the prairie winds, year by year, carve the furrow more deeply, and the wild sunflower blossoms along its course, as if in silent memory of those who sank beneath its burdens.

But if the Trail, as a continuous highway of travel, has ceased to exist, the time will come, we may confidently believe, when it will be reoccupied, never to be abandoned again. It is so occupied at the present time over a large portion of its length. Railroads practically follow the old line from Independence to Caspar, Wyo., some fifty miles east of Independence Rock; and from Bear river on the Utah-Wyoming line to the mouth of the Columbia. The time is not distant when the intermediate space will be occupied, and possibly a continuous and unbroken movement of trains over the entire line may some day follow. In a future still more remote there may be realized a project which is even now being agitated, of building a magnificent national road along this line as a memorial highway which shall serve the future and commemorate the past.

The Oregon Trail and the Santa Fe Trail were considered as starting from the vicinity of the mouth of the Kansas river. Although the real starting point was St. Louis, the journey from that city to the Kansas was generally made by steamboat. But at the latter point the course of the Missouri turned very nearly due north and no longer lay in a direction to accommodate those who were going either to Santa Fe or to the Columbia. It therefore became necessary to abandon the boats here and organize land expeditions. Two towns grew up as a consequence of this outfitting trade — *Independence* and *Westport,* progenitors of the present Kansas City. Independence was the older of the two towns. In 1825 the Osage title to the western strip of the State of Missouri was extinguished and settlement began to pour into this territory. The town site of Independence was located on the 29th of March, 1827. Its early growth was largely due to the Santa Fe trade. Previously to the founding of Independence the Santa Fe expeditions had mostly started from Franklin, Missouri, but now began to outfit at the point where their route finally left the river. Later the Rocky mountain and Columbia expeditions came to start from the same point and a thriving business was developed in making up the various outfits. Shops were necessary for the repair of wagons and the shoeing of horses. Warehouses containing all kinds of supplies, markets for the sale of horses and mules, and establishments of all sorts suited to the caravan trade of the prairies, made their appearance.

The rise of Westport so close to Independence was due to the caprices of the Missouri river. That erratic stream destroyed the steamboat landing of Independence. Farther up stream there was a stable bank and here the steamboats went. The place was called Westport landing, and was the true beginning of the future Kansas City. Westport itself was back some distance from the landing. It was laid out in 1833 and grew rapidly, diverting much of the trade from Independence. The growth of the latter town was moreover much retarded by the Mormon agitation which raged so fiercely there for a number of years.

The early life of both of these towns depended almost entirely upon the trade along the Oregon and Santa Fe trails, and that with the numerous tribes of Indians located in the surrounding country. Both were outstripped at a later date by Kansas City, which was laid out in 1838. Westport has long since been absorbed by that city, but the older town still retains its independence.[1]

Leaving *Independence* the route followed the old Santa Fe Trail for about two days' journey, the points of interest occurring as follows:

Elm Grove, Round Grove, or *Caravan Grove,* as it was variously called, 33[2] miles; a good camping ground. "Here stood a venerable elm tree that must have seen many ages." (Wislizenus.)

Junction of Oregon and Santa Fe Trails, 41 miles. The Santa Fe Trail being first established, a sign board was later set up to show where the Oregon Trail branched off. It bore the simple legend "Road to Oregon," and, as Wislizenus pertinently remarks, "to Japan, China, and the East Indies might have been added." Surely so unostentatious a sign never before nor since announced so long a journey. This point was a little northwest of the present town of

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[1] The data for this account of Independence and Westport were derived from Messrs. John McCoy of Independence and Phil E. Chappell and J. S. Chick of Kansas City.

[2] The distances here given are from Independence. They are close approximations. Authorities for distances are mainly Fremont, Stansbury, Joel Palmer, and the late R. R. surveys.

Gardner, Kansas, the route having already passed near the modern villages of Glenn and Olathe.

Wakarusa Creek, 53 miles. The crossing was not far from where the railroad running south from Lawrence, Kansas, now crosses the stream. The Trail then followed for a considerable distance the divide between the Wakarusa and the Kansas.

Kansas River, 81 miles. The principal crossing was at Papin's Ferry, where Topeka, Kansas, now stands. There were two other crossings five and ten miles above.

Turkey Creek, 95 miles. This stream is now marked as Cross Creek on the U. S. Land Office map, and the ford was in the neighborhood of the present Rossville.

Little Vermilion, 119 miles. Noted on some modern maps as Red Vermilion. This point is in the vicinity of Louisville, Kansas.

Big Vermilion, 160 miles. Now known as the Black Vermilion, a tributary of the Big Blue. The crossing was in the vicinity of the modern Bigelow, Kansas, and near here the road from Leavenworth came in.

Big Blue, 174 miles. The ford was near the mouth of the Little Blue. Eight miles beyond the Big Blue the road from St. Joseph came in. The junction was near Ballard Falls as given on the Land Office maps. Distance from St. Joseph about 100 miles; from Leavenworth about 164 miles.

Wyeth's Creek, 208 miles. A small stream but an important name.

Big Sandy, 226 miles, near its junction with the Little Blue. The course of the Trail since the last station has been along the Little Blue. The Kansas-Nebraska line is crossed near the 97th meridian.

Little Blue, 242 miles. From the mouth of the Big Sandy the Trail chords a bend of the Little Blue and strikes the stream, a few miles northwest of Hebron, Nebraska.

Head of Little Blue, 296 miles. The Trail left the Little Blue not far from Leroy, Nebraska.

The Platte River, 316 miles. The Trail reached the Platte about twenty miles below the head of Grand Island. Upon approaching the Platte the traveler came upon a range of low hills built up by the winds from the drifting sands of the valley. These hills were known in the nomenclature of the Trail as the Coasts of the Platte.

The Trail now lay up the immediate valley of the Platte to the junction of the North and South Forks. There is no feature of importance en route unless it be *Brady Island,* which received its name from a lamentable affair in the early days. The story as told by Rufus Sage runs thus: In 1833 a party of trappers was descending the Platte in a boat laden with furs. Brady and a companion had quarreled a good deal en route and were very bitter toward each other. While in camp on this island the other members of the party went out to hunt, leaving Brady and his enemy to guard the boat. Upon their return they found Brady dead, having been killed, according to his companion's statement, by the accidental discharge of his own gun. The party doubted the truth of the story but could not disprove it. They resumed their journey after burying Brady, but were soon compelled by the shallow water to take to the shore. Becoming destitute of provisions they separated and started for the settlements, each man by himself. The night after the separation the suspected murderer was trying to light a fire by the discharge of his pistol in order to drive off mosquitoes, when in some way he discharged it into his own thigh, inflicting a dangerous wound. He lay there in agony for six days, when he was found by some Pawnee Indians and taken to the lodge of a chief. Here he lingered for a few days and died. Before he died he confessed to the murder of Brady.

Lower Ford of the South Platte, 433 miles. This carried the traveler into the long and slender tongue of land which lies between the north and south forks of the Platte. After crossing, the road kept up the north bank of the South Fork for a considerable distance, and then turning to the northwest, reached the North Fork near the mouth of Ash creek. Travelers more generally, however, crossed the South Fork at the

Upper Ford of the South Platte, 493 miles. At this point the road to the trading posts near the headwaters of the South Platte left the Trail and continued up the south bank of the river. This road also led to the headwaters of the Arkansas, to Bent's Fort, and to Taos and Santa Fe.

Ash Creek, or *Ash Hollow,* 513 miles. It was here that the Trail touched the North Fork.

Court House Rock, 555 miles. The Trail is now passing through a section of country where the rocks have been worn into a great variety of fantastic forms, some of which were given names by the earliest explorers which they retain to this day. *Gonneville Creek,* near which Court House Rock stands, was the name properly applied to what is now Pumpkin creek. It was named for a trapper who was killed there by the Indians in the early thirties.

Chimney Rock, 571 miles. This formation was one of the well-known landmarks of the Trail. It was a cylindrical tower of rock rising from the top of a conical hill. Authorities vary as to its height. Rufus Sage gives it (1841) as three hundred feet for the hill and two hundred feet for the tower. All observers agree that the tower has diminished greatly in height since it was first seen by white men. Sage says that when he saw it the loss since 1831 amounted to about fifty feet, which led him to ruminate upon what its height must have been no longer ago than " a couple of centuries " !

Scott's Bluffs, 616 miles. After leaving Chimney Rock and proceeding about fifteen miles the Trail bore away from the river, returning to it in the neighborhood of Scott's Bluffs. The whole distance was full of interest owing to the fantastic and wonderful forms of the rocks already alluded to.

The name, Scott's Bluffs, arose from one of the most melancholy incidents in the history of the fur trade. The story has been often and variously told, but the most complete account is that given by Irving in his *Captain Bonneville.* It appears that a party of trappers was descending from the upper Platte in canoes, when their boat was upset in some rapids above the Laramie river, and all their powder was spoiled and their provisions lost. Deprived of the means both of sustenance and defense their plight was a desperate one. To add to their misfortune one of the party by the name of Scott fell seriously ill at Laramie Fork and was unable to proceed. His companions were in great distress to know what to do, when some of their number came upon a fresh trail of white men leading down the river. It was of the last importance to overtake this party and share their protection. But Scott could not move. In this dilemma the other members of the party, absenting themselves on the plea of securing food, deliberately deserted Scott and made haste to overtake the advance party. In this they succeeded, but instead of returning for the sick man, they represented that he had died of disease. Nothing further was thought of it at the time. In the following year some of the members of the party, returning with others to the mountains, came upon a human skeleton in the vicinity of Scott's Bluffs. It proved to be the remains of Scott, and it was clear that the wretched man had crawled this immense distance of upwards of forty miles before death overtook him. How the above facts came to light is not known, for it would seem that nothing short of a deathbed confession could wrest the truth from men guilty of so base a desertion. By some accounts Scott is mentioned as a trader, and by one as the leader of the party. The name is occasionally seen in the early correspondence and it is quite probable that he was a man of some standing in the mountains. Just when the event happened is likewise uncertain, but probably as early as 1830. Irving, narrating Bonneville's journey in 1832, speaks of it as having taken place "a number of years" before.[4]

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[4] Ferris, *Life in the Rocky Mountains,* says Scott was a clerk in the Am. F. Co. returning from the mountains and that he fell ill and the

Horse Creek, 630 miles.

Laramie River, at *Fort John* or *Laramie*, 667 miles. Laramie river takes its name from a trapper by the name of Laramé, Joseph Laramée, as one writer gives it, who lost his life on the stream in 1821. The name was a frequent one among the voyageurs, and is often met with in the American Fur Company correspondence.

The confluence of the Laramie and the Platte was a point of great importance in the history of the Trail. The route here left the plains and entered the mountainous country. The next point where repairs could be made or supplies procured, was Fort Bridger, 394 miles beyond. There was always a stop of some duration at Fort Laramie, a general overhauling and rearrangement of cargoes, and a much-needed respite from the continuous strain of daily travel. It was here too that the American Fur Company connection with Fort Pierre and the Missouri river came in.

The Trail from Council Bluffs, which was much used. held to the north bank of the Platte until above the mouth of the Laramie, when it made the crossing.

Upon leaving the Laramie the Trail continued up the valley of the North Platte, although the rugged character of the country often forced it back a considerable distance from the stream. In fact it at once passed on to the plateau between the Platte and the Laramie and did not follow the immediate bank of the river for a considerable distance. The first important point was

Big Spring, 680 miles. This spring was also called Warm Spring. It was in the valley of a "dry" stream about three miles from the Platte. Five miles beyond this

leader of the party was compelled to leave him in order to push on and overhaul another party. The leader agreed to wait at these bluffs until Scott should come along. He left Scott with two men to be brought down in a bullboat, but the boat was soon wrecked and lost with everything in it, even the arms and ammunition. The two men then forsook their companion and overtook the main party several days later. The leader had not stopped where he agreed. Scott's bones were found the following spring near the agreed place of waiting.

the road forked and there were two roads for a distance. The first point of interest on the right hand road was

Bitter Cottonwood Creek, 690 miles. So called from a species of poplar which Fremont calls *liard amère*. He called the creek *Fourche Amère.*

Horse Shoe Creek, 704 miles. This was a considerable stream with good timber and pasturage. The Trail is three miles from the river.

From Horse Shoe Creek the road bore toward the river which was reached in a distance of eight miles and was followed for eight miles more. This part of the route was through the beautiful lower Platte canon, where the Cheyenne and Northern Railroad now runs.

La Bonté Creek, 733 miles. The left hand branch of the road rejoined the main line between this and

Wagon-hound Creek, 736 miles. The distance by the two roads was about the same.

La Prêle Creek, 752 miles, not known in that day (1843) by its present name. The road is some distance back from the river, but touches its banks twelve miles beyond.

Deer Creek, 769 miles. This is the largest tributary of the Platte since leaving the Laramie. It was an important camping place on the Trail during the whole emigration period. A ferry over the Platte was later established just above this point.

Ford of the Platte, 794 miles. This was the best ford on this part of the river, and was a little above the present village of Caspar, Wyoming. In later years a road was much used along the right or south bank of the river to opposite the mouth of Poison Spider creek, but it was not used in the earlier history of the Trail.

Red Spring, 802 miles. Near Red Buttes.

Poison Spider Creek, 807 miles. The road is now a little back from the river and here leaves it altogether, crossing the angle between the Platte and the Sweetwater. It passes here, although not within sight; one of the finest cañons in the world, where the river cuts through mountains of red sandstone. This was the Fiery Narrows of the Astorians,

INDEPENDENCE ROCK

and it was here that Fremont was shipwrecked in trying to pass with a canoe in 1842. The valley of the Platte here turns squarely to the south, and the main river finds its source afar off in the North Park of Colorado. The river is no longer followed by the Trail which continues westward.

Independence Rock, 838 miles. This is another important point in the journey, for it introduces the traveler into the beautiful valley of the *Sweetwater river*. The name of this stream dates from the period of Ashley's expeditions. A fitting explanation of its origin might easily be given even in the absence of any historic data. The water in the adjacent country for many miles around was so impregnated with alkaline salts as to be unfit to drink. The thirsty traveler, coming suddenly upon this stream of pure mountain water, would very naturally by contrast call it the Sweetwater. But the French name, which was the first given, was not *Eau Douce*, but *Eau Sucrée*, sugared water, and arose, according to Ferris, from the fact that in the very early years, certainly before 1830, a pack mule laden with sugar was lost in the stream.

Independence Rock was a famous landmark. It is an immense oblong block of oval, but irregular shape, along the southern base of which lay the river and along the northern base the old Trail. It covers an area of over twenty-seven acres and its highest point is 155 feet above the level of the river. It is wholly isolated and looks as if it had been dropped there in the midst of the plain. The site of the rock became from the first a great camping place, and the custom early arose of inscribing on it the names of travelers who passed it. It was thus, as Father De Smet justly observes, "the great register of the desert."

The name is of very early date, probably before 1830, and if so, coming from the Ashley expeditions. The incident which gave rise to it is well known, from various references, all of which indicate that a party of hunters encamped at the base of this rock on a Fourth of July and here celebrated the anniversary of the country's independence. Sage says that "it derived its name from a party of Americans on their way to Oregon under the lead of one Tharp, who celebrated the Fourth of July at this place — they being the first company of whites that ever made the journey from the States via South Pass." As Oregon then included everything west of South Pass, this may very likely refer to the first Ashley party that followed this route, probably in 1823. The name Tharp occurs elsewhere in narratives of the time, but its use here may possibly be a misprint for the well-known name Fraeb, always called Frapp by the trappers. The statement itself is entirely probable. Sage says that "the surface [of the rock] is covered with the names of travelers, traders, trappers, emigrants, engraven upon it in almost every conceivable part for the distance of many feet above its base — but most prominent among them all is the word 'Independence,' inscribed by the patriotic band who first christened this lone monument of nature in honor of Liberty's birthday." This is confirmed by Farnham who refers to the rock as "a large rock, oval in form, on which the old trappers many years ago carved the word 'Independence' and their own names."

While the general explanation above given, that a party here celebrated the Fourth of July and gave the rock its name, is undoubtedly correct, many and amusing are the theories which have gained currency concerning its origin. Mr. John B. Wyeth sagely informs us that it was the "resting place of Lewis and Clark on the 4th of July"! One of the old residents still living in this locality is always ready to entertain the ignorant visitor with an *authentic* account of how the rock came to get its name. It was on the occasion of *General* Fremont's first exploring tour to the Rocky mountains.[5] Word was given out that the General would be at the rock, as yet unnamed, on the Fourth of July and would deliver an oration. Swift couriers rode up and down the Trail urging the emigrants who were ahead to lay by at the rock and those in the rear to make haste and catch up. To hear a man of "General" Fremont's reputation was an opportunity not to be missed, and there was consequently a great concourse of travelers present when the orator and the day arrived. The enthusiastic admirers of the renowned warrior bestirred themselves vigorously and hauled up the steep sides of the rock the best carriage they had. In this the General was drawn back and forth along the summit of the rock. He then discoursed to the eager crowd upon the greatness of the day. After he was done six couples of plighted lovers ascended to the summit of the rock, and there, on this sublime natural altar, surrendered their independence pair by pair in voluntary bondage to each other. The glorious record of these proceedings was perpetuated from that day forth in the name of the rock.

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[5] The Lieutenant and Brevet-Captain at that time saw no general's stars in his immediate horoscope. Beyond the achievement of having married Senator Benton's daughter there had not been much in his career so far to give his name wide celebrity.

Less elaborate, but not less to the point, is the explanation given by another local authority who assures the visitor with the utmost gravity that the rock derives its name from the fact that it stands out in the plain *independent* of all surrounding rocks or mountains! After all, this explanation will not seem so absurd when it is remembered that it occurred to so eminent an observer as Father De Smet when he first saw the rock.

It may be added that the Masons have a tradition that the name came from the fact that the rites of their order were once celebrated upon this rock on the nation's birthday.

The Devil's Gate, 843 miles. This remarkable feature is a rift in a granite ridge through which the river flows. It is about four hundred feet deep, with sides nearly vertical, and less than three hundred feet apart at the top. It is one of the most notable features of its kind in the world. The traveler who takes the trouble to leave the road for a mile or so and walk out to the summit of the Devil's Gate is rewarded with a prospect such as no other point on the Trail affords. Beneath him is the tremendous chasm through the solid granite at the bottom of which courses the gentle Sweetwater. To the westward a magnificent valley spreads out before him as far as he can see, some ten or fifteen miles wide, a paradise in those days for buffalo and other game. Through the beautiful valley the serpentine course of the stream is plainly visible from the silver sheen of its surface or from the ribbon of foliage which grows along its banks. Below the Gate a similar valley lies spread out for many miles even to the mouth of the river. All over this region huge protuberances arise composed of detached masses of granite, the most interesting of which is Independence Rock. Lifting the eye above the surrounding plains it rests upon a cordon of mountains which completely encircles the beholder. To the northeast the Rattlesnake Hills, to the east the Caspar range through which the North Platte flows; to the southeast the Seminole and Ferris ranges; to the south and southwest the Green mountains; and finally to the west Crooks' Peak, which closes the horizon in that direction. Near this peak is a little depression through which the returning Astorians made their way from the forbidding and desert tracts south of the mountains. One has only to behold the valley of the Sweetwater to understand with what delight these way-worn travelers must have welcomed this paradise of the mountains, filled as it was, when they saw it, with grazing herds of buffalo, and water and pasturage surpassing all their possible needs.

From the Devil's Gate the route continued along the Sweetwater river nearly to its source. It crossed the stream several times and there came to be two or three different routes paralleling each other for considerable distances. It will not be of profit to record minutely these unimportant variations from the general line. About thirty-six miles west of the Devil's Gate the road passed through a cañon, where it crossed the stream three times in a short distance. This place was called Three Crossings. In several places the road was forced out upon the hills and back from the river, sometimes on one side and sometimes on the other.

The road was usually dusty, the small streams alkaline, and only the presence of the pure Sweetwater saved this portion of the Trail from being the most trying of any.

South Pass, 947 miles. (Fremont gives 962 miles.) "Here hail Oregon," as the itinerary of Palmer has it. This is the most celebrated pass in the entire length of the Continental Divide. Here the great trans-continental road passed from Atlantic to Pacific waters, and the traveler, though only half-way to his destination, felt that he could see the beginning of the end. The pass itself, as a natural feature, is perhaps less striking and interesting than any other. It is less than 7,500 feet above the level of the sea. It is one of the few passes that are free of timber. There is no well-defined gorge through the hills, but a broad, open valley of so gentle slope that Fremont in his explorations was in doubt what was the highest point. As a practicable pass either for a highway or a railroad, it could hardly be surpassed. The distances from Independence and Fort Vancouver were nearly equal, so that it was in a strict sense a half-way point.

The discovery of the pass is lost in the historic obscurity of this early period. The returning party of the Astorians came very near passing through it, but were deflected from the route by the fear of following too closely a band of Indians. They accordingly passed considerably south before turning east. The Rev. Samuel Parker in 1835 refers to this fact in the following words: "The valley was not discovered until some years since. Mr. Hunt [Stuart, rather] and his party, more than twenty years ago, went near but did not find it, though in search of some favorable passage." The pass was most probably discovered in 1823 by one of Henry's detached parties, who are known to have visited Green river valley from the Bighorn in that year. Tradition says that it was discovered by Etienne Provost, and this was probably the case.

The name was virtually given before the pass was discovered. It was long recognized that a pass must be found south of those crossed by Lewis and Clark, and *Southern Pass,* in contradistinction to the northern pass, was a term already coined and in waiting for the situation when it should be discovered. There is evidence that it had already been applied to two other passes, before South Pass proper was discovered. But when that remarkable crossing of the mountains came into use the name fell naturally upon it, and this in common usage was quickly abbreviated to South Pass.

The Trail now lies upon the Pacific slope and bears off to the southwest. The first point of note was the

Pacific Springs, 952 miles, the first water of the Pacific ocean.

The Little Sandy, a tributary of the Big Sandy, 969 miles. Here was the junction with Sublette's Cut-Off.

Big Sandy, 985 miles. Thence down the Big Sandy to

Green River, 1,014 miles. That portion of the route from South Pass to Green river was very disagreeable, being mainly through a dry, barren, sandy country, in which the heat and dust of summer were almost overpowering. Green river was forded near the mouth of the Sandy. The route then lay along the right bank of the river for a short distance when it crossed to

Black Fork, 1,033 miles. This was three miles below the junction with *Ham's Fork,* an important stream in those days. Before the founding of Fort Bridger the Trail went up the valley of Ham's Fork on its way to Bear river. Here also passes the Oregon Short Line railroad of recent years and the junction with the Union Pacific, at Granger, is very nearly where the old Trail struck Black Fork.

Fort Bridger, 1,070 miles. This was the second great stopping place on the Trail and the first after leaving Fort Laramie. The post was built by James Bridger in 1843 and we are fortunate in having the founder's own narrative of the event. "I have established a small fort," he wrote to Chouteau, December 10, 1843, "with a blacksmith shop and a supply of iron, on the road of the emigrants on Black's

Fork of Green river, which promises fairly. They, in coming out, are generally well supplied with money, but by the time they get there are in want of all kinds of supplies. Horses, provisions, smith-work, etc., bring ready cash from them, and should I receive the goods hereby ordered will do a considerable business in that way with them. The same establishment trades with the Indians in the neighborhood who have mostly a good number of beaver with them."

The post was in a beautiful location in the valley of a strong mountain stream whose pure waters, fresh from the melting snows of the Uintah mountains, and alive with wholesome mountain trout, flowed through the post in several branches, each lined with a fringe of trees kept alive by the perennial moisture of the soil. It was veritably an oasis in the desert, and its selection does great credit to the good judgment of its founder.

Having again arranged his outfit, repaired his wagons, rested his stock and replenished his supplies, the traveler resumed his way, arriving first at the

Big Muddy, 1,088 miles. Following this stream towards its source for thirty-two miles and then crossing the divide and traveling sixteen miles farther, a part of the way in the valley of Twin creek, where the Oregon Short Line now runs, the traveler reached

Bear River, 1,136 miles, about where the Oregon Short Line now touches the stream. This noteworthy stream finds its source nearly east of Salt Lake City, Utah, and flows north through almost two degrees of latitude, when it turns completely around to the westward and flows south for upwards of one hundred miles into Great Salt Lake. From the point where the old Trail touched it to that where it turns south, its course lay nearly on the direct line between Forts Bridger and Hall. Affording as it did an easy passage through the mountain ranges of that region, it was always followed by the emigrants and is followed by the railroad today. The Trail therefore descended the course of Bear river. At the distance of ten miles was the

Junction with Sublette's Cut-Off, 1,146 miles.

Sublette's Cut-Off, or the "Dry Drive," as it was called on account of the long stretch of waterless country between the Big Sandy and Green river, was designed to eliminate the wide detour caused by going to Fort Bridger. It left the main road at Little Sandy, 969 miles, and taking a course nearly due west, reached the

Big Sandy, 975 miles, and

Green River, 1,021 miles, just above the junction of Labarge creek, which comes in from the west. The road then bore to the southwest across Labarge and Fontenelle creeks. It crossed Ham's Fork some distance above the point where the modern railroad leaves it, and then wound its way through the mountains with a slight trend to the north until it reached

Bear River, 1,093 miles. The cut-off therefore saved fifty-three miles, but missed the supply point at Fort Bridger.

Resuming the main trail with the Fort Bridger itinerary the next notable point was

Smith's Fork, 1,149 miles. This name also dates from the Ashley period and most probably was in honor of the famous adventurer, J. S. Smith, although there was another Smith in the Ashley expeditions of this period.

Thompson's Fork, 1,156 miles. This name, like the preceding one, belongs to the period of Ashley's expeditions, and was given for one of his trappers. There were two branches to the road in this vicinity. The northern branch ascended Thompson's Fork about two miles, climbed over the hill a distance of five miles, where the two branches united on the right bank of Bear river. The other branch forded the river near Thompson's Fork, followed around a sharp southern bend where Nephur, Utah, now is, and finally, after a distance of seventeen miles, rejoined the northern branch upon the right bank. The short cut had a severe hill to contend with; the other branch had two fords and seventeen against seven miles.

Continuing, the road reached

Soda Springs, 1,206 miles, at the great northern bend of Bear river. This noted place, which was also known as Beer Springs, was an example of what is found on a stupendous scale at the headwaters of the Yellowstone. It was an object of great curiosity to travelers. There were numerous hot springs, differing widely in character and appearance, and there was one miniature geyser erupting to a height of about three feet at regular intervals. The noise accompanying these pulsations caused it to be named the Steamboat Spring.

After satisfying his curiosity at this singular place the traveler resumed his journey down the river. In about four miles the road parted company with Bear river which here turned abruptly to the south. Continuing westwardly for a few miles the road passed over the Divide between Bear river and the

Portneuf River, a water of the Columbia. This beautiful stream has one peculiar feature which is rarely seen on any other. Its flow is constantly interrupted by low rock dams of very irregular outline, which have been formed by some process not easy to account for. These dams convert the river into a series of quiet pools separated by cascades of exquisite beauty, varying in height from an inch to four feet.

There was another and a shorter road which did not follow the Portneuf, but crossed its upper branches and entered the Snake river plain along the valley of Ross Fork. The distance by the Portneuf route, which was that usually taken, was about 80 miles; that by the other about 70 miles.

Fort Hall, 1,288 miles (Fremont 1,323 miles) was located on the left bank of the Snake river, nine miles above the mouth of the Portneuf in the fine bottom formed by the confluence of these two streams. This was the third important station on the Trail and the first on Columbian waters. It was the first post on the route that belonged to the Hudson Bay Company. Here the traveler made his preparations for the last stage of the journey to the mouth of the Columbia.

Oftentimes wagons were left here and pack horses substituted, but as the road became better known, wagons were taken clear through. From Fort Hall the route lay along the left bank of the Snake. The first feature of importance was the

Portneuf Crossing, 1,294 miles, and the next,

American Falls, 1,308 miles. This fall is said to have derived its name from the fact that a party of American hunters, descending the river in a canoe, came unawares upon it and were all lost.

Raft River, 1,334 miles. Here the California road turned off in 1846.[*]

Marsh Creek, 1,350 miles. This part of the Trail was well back from the river.

Goose Creek, 1,367 miles, part of the distance from the last station being along the river.

Rock Creek, 1,391 miles. The road touched the river at one intermediate point. After reaching Rock creek it followed the valley of this stream for fifteen miles and in twenty miles more reached

Salmon Falls Creek, 1,433 miles.

Salmon Falls, 1,439 miles. Beyond this point the road chorded some bends in the river and at a distance of twenty-three miles reached the

First Crossing of the Snake, 1,464 miles, in the neighborhood of the modern Glenn's Ferry. It then struck across the country in a northwesterly direction with no feature of interest until it reached

Boise River, 1,537 miles, about in the vicinity of the modern Boise City. The road then turned to the west down the valley of the Boise which it followed to

Fort Boise, 1,585 miles, a Hudson Bay Company post located on the right bank of the Snake river, eight miles below the mouth of the Boise. The Snake was again crossed at this point after which the road turned to the northwest, bearing away from the river. At fifteen miles it crossed

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[*] At the date of 1843, the California Trail which passed by the northwestern extremity of Great Salt Lake had scarcely come into use at all, and we have therefore not attempted to follow it.

Malheur River, 1,601 miles, near the modern town of Vale, Oregon. The road again touched the Snake about twenty-three miles beyond the Malheur and five miles farther reached

Burnt River, 1,632 miles. It then ascended Burnt river for about twenty- six miles, and crossing a divide, reached

Powder River, 1,692 miles. At the point where the Trail touched Powder river there stood in early days a solitary pine tree, called by the French in that country *L'Arbre Seul,* or the Lone Tree. It was a conspicuous and important landmark, but some needy emigrant cut it down in 1843, and when Fremont passed that way and was looking for it, he found it freshly fallen. It became thereafter known as The Lone Pine Stump.

Descending this stream ten miles in a northerly direction, to the point where it turns abruptly to the southeast, and continuing thence northwest the road entered

The Grande Ronde, 1,736 miles. This was a celebrated valley in the mountains, circular in shape as its name implies, a fine pasture, and an excellent camping place. It was all the more important as being the point where the Trail started across the difficult Blue mountains. From the point where the Trail entered the Grande Ronde to the foot of the Blue mountains where the crossing began was about fifteen miles. Thence the customary route led to the summit very much on the line of the modern railroad; but in descending the west slope it followed a more direct course than does the railroad.

Umatilla River, 1,791 miles, near the site of the present Pendleton was the first point of importance west of the Blue mountains. The trail followed the Umatilla forty-four miles to the

Columbia River, 1,835 miles.

Another but less frequented route left the Grande Ronde in a northerly direction and reached the Columbia at the mouth of the Walla Walla.

From Umatilla the road continued down the left bank of the Columbia, passing in succession the following points:

John Day River, 1,904 miles, a stream named for John Day of Astoria renown.

Des Chutes River, 1,918 miles.

The Dalles, 1,934 miles.

The Cascades, 1,977 miles.

Fort Vancouver, 2,020 miles, opposite to the mouth of the Willamette, and properly considered the end of the Trail. This point is still 104 miles from old Astoria and 114 miles from the mouth of the Columbia.

An old emigrant road ran from the Dalles south of Mount Hood to Oregon City on the Willamette, a distance of 160 miles.

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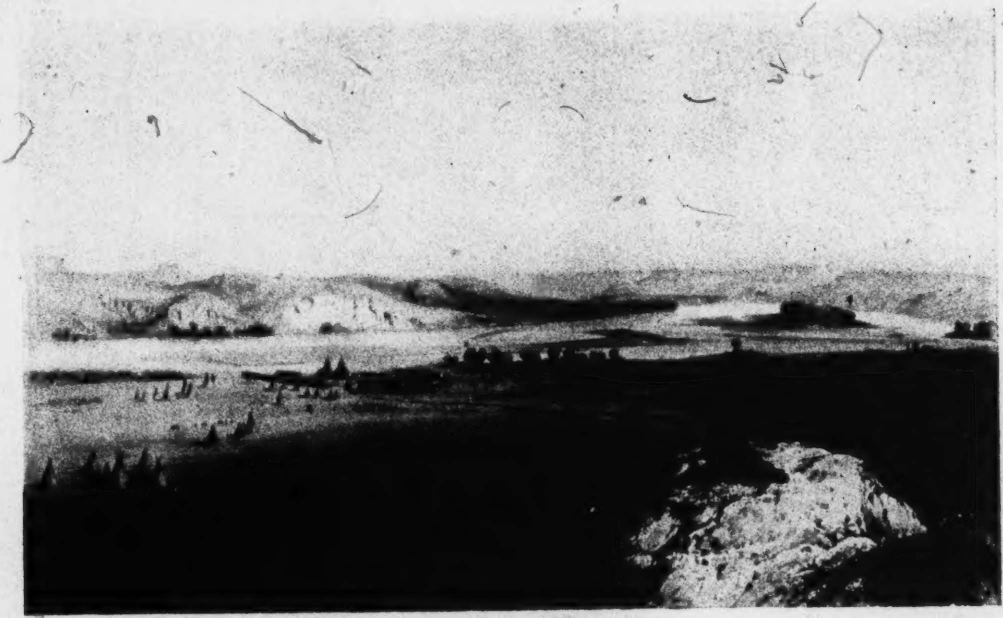

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BY

HIRAM MARTIN CHITTENDEN

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CHAPTER XXVII.

THE SANTA FE TRADE.

SANTA FE.

Antiquity of Santa Fe — Early history — Description — Character of population — Government of New Mexico — Religion — Jealous feeling toward the United States — Backward state of commerce — Domestic life — Allegiance of the people to their government.

THE scene of our narrative now shifts from regions that had but recently come to the knowledge of the civilized world to one of the oldest settlements of European colonists upon the continent of America. Three hundred years before the close of the period covered by this work the Spanish had entered New Mexico, Arizona, and California. Long before any one but De Soto had entered the almost illimitable valley of the Mississippi Coronado had crossed many tributaries of that stream and had even penetrated to the plains of central Kansas. At the time when Louisiana came into the possession of the United States, there were communities upon its very borders already venerable with two centuries of history under European government, and entitled to be called "old" in a degree which many of the United States, even a century later, can not approach. In dealing with those scattered communities of traders whose adventures are the subject of our present inquiries, we find them now wandering over unknown and unexplored wilds, treading upon ground untrodden by white men before, and anon trafficking in the streets of a town where Europeans had held sway for six generations. It was a singular circumstance, this contiguity of the new and the old, and how such a condition could have lasted so long would be quite inexplicable without a clear understanding of the claims of the rival colonizing powers of Europe.

Santa Fe was founded in the first or second decade of the seventeenth century. The precise date and circumstances of this event are not known, and may never be, but the date itself lies between 1609 and 1617. Thus, while not the oldest town in the United States, it is one of the oldest and is surpassed in this distinction by only two or three others.

The little village had an arduous road to travel in its first two hundred years of existence. It was conquered by the natives and reconquered from them, but finally arrived at the portal of the nineteenth century with its authority fairly established, although not upon that firm foundation which alone can ensure the stability of government. The native races, with whom its people had mingled to such an extent as to produce a mixed class in which the Spanish and native blood about equally prevailed, had never become, in spite of this consanguinity, loyal supporters of their Spanish and Mexican rulers.

Santa Fe, during the period of its most prosperous trade with the United States, was a city of perhaps three thousand inhabitants. It had grown up among the ancient Pueblo towns of the upper Rio Grande, and it is even claimed by some, although on doubtful authority, to have occupied the site of one. The city lies on a small tributary of the Rio Grande, some twelve miles east of the river. The valley where the town is built is one of the most beautiful in the West. The surrounding peaks, some of them resting at altitudes where the snow rarely disappears, engirdle it like a mighty wall which is at once an ornament and a protection. The climate is mild and salubrious and the situation as a whole is ideal.

The old city presented in appearance nothing in common with a modern American city. The streets seem to have radiated from a central point like the roots of a tree, along lines of least resistance, and are mostly without any pretense of regularity, either in direction, width, or grade. The only marked exception was the Plaza, or public square, the central common of the town. On one side of this square stood, and still stands, a long, low, one-story building, dignified with the name of palace, and probably the most interesting historic edifice in New Mexico or in the entire southwest. Other buildings of notable antiquity are the cathedral and church of San Miguel, the latter being one of the very oldest structures in the United States. The buildings were mostly constructed of adobe and at a distance presented the appearance of a group of brick-kilns. It is recorded of a very intelligent and discriminating observer that upon his first visit to Santa Fe he hailed the sight of these rude heaps as evidences that he was near his destination, for he thought them simply the brick yards where the city manufactured its building material. He was greatly astonished to learn that they were the city itself. Few of the buildings had any glass, yet the interiors were often furnished with a considerable degree of luxury.

In the little town thus meagerly described and in others of lesser note for several hundreds of miles along the Rio Grande north and south, dwelt a population little enough like that of the United States. It was not very far removed from the ancient pueblos in whose midst it existed and with whom it was so largely amalgamated. Art and learning were practically unknown except among the military and religious orders and even there they scarcely deserved the name. An impenetrable ignorance of the outside world pervaded nearly all classes, an ignorance in part the result of the extreme isolation of the colony and in part fostered by the authorities, both civil and religious, as a safeguard to the never-sure allegiance of the subjects either to church or state. No such thing as a public press was known. Of medical and other sciences there was the densest ignorance, and even the common arts, upon which so much of everyday life depends, were in a hopelessly backward state. Agriculture rivaled its sister arts in the state of neglect which oppressed it. The industry of mining, the most important in the province, was so trammeled with government restrictions and ignorance of the art of mining that the wealth which lay within the bosom of those mountains remained almost untouched until that country came into the possession of the United States.[1]

The government of New Mexico was no better than its various manifestations that we have just described. It was, what Gregg aptly calls it, a military hierarchy. The army and the priests were the ruling power. Although a feeble attempt was at one time made at representative government, it was promptly abandoned and the conduct of affairs was generally prescribed according to the unrestricted will of colonial governors. Justice was administered on the basis of open and unblushing corruption and a long purse was the only passport to judicial favors.

The religion of the people was exclusively Catholic. No other form of public worship was allowed and foreigners were compelled to confine their devotions to their own homes. The Church was the one flourishing institution in the colony and the repository of what little learning was to be found there.[2]

Here, as in all her colonies, Spain exhibited that petty jealousy of rival powers which is born of conscious inferiority and a prescience of impending decay. This feeling was particularly bitter toward the United States, which to Spanish eyes was a black cloud rising on the horizon and certain soon to burst like a tempest over the land. Throughout the two score years of commercial intercourse prior to the conquest of Mexico, American citizens underwent every form of indignity at the hands of the government, from connivance at petty thefts of the trader's goods to the basest and most unprovoked murders. The moralist may not wholly approve of the motive behind the American cause in the War with Mexico, but if all other motives were lacking, that alone of expiation for the accumulated wrongs of many years would justify the conquest of this vast territory from a government that did not know how to rule it.

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[1] James Purcell was the discoverer of gold in the mountains of Colorado. About the year 1804, while wandering alone among the mountains near the head of the Arkansas, he found a small amount of gold, which he later threw away despairing of ever reaching civilization. Gregg, in *Commerce of the Prairies*, vol. II., p. 185, states that "some trappers have reported an extensive gold region about the sources of the Platte river; yet although recent search has been made it has not been discovered." Some reader of the copy of Gregg's work which belongs to the Mercantile Library of St. Louis placed the following note opposite the above extract in the year 1858: "The truth of this report has been confirmed this year."

[2] Governor Marmaduke, who visited Santa Fe in 1824, expressed his astonishment at the blind religious zeal of the people. Only the Catholic religion was tolerated, but it seemed to him unquestionably the one best suited to the people.

It follows as a matter of course that with a government and a people such as have been described, commerce could not but languish. The trade of the colony was hampered alike by distance and government restrictions. Before the American imports began to arrive, foreign goods came mostly by way of Vera Cruz over a road between fifteen hundred and two thousand miles long. By the time they reached Sante Fe they brought a price (when people could afford to buy) which seems almost incredible when compared with those of today. Under these conditions trade was necessarily small and the people were forced to do without many things which others of no better means, but living nearer the coast, could procure. It was a blessing to the isolated New Mexican when the hated and dreaded American arrived.

From this sinister aspect of New Mexican institutions it might be concluded that a people so circumstanced must be unhappy and miserable as under an unjust oppression. But this would be a great mistake. Buried in ignorance, they did not know their true estate and, like the negro in slavery, were contented with a condition which would be abhorrent to a people of higher civilization. Devoid of the cares that spring from an ambitious nature, content with their daily lot, looking forward to no higher condition, they exhibited to the foreign visitor a more serene contentment than he was familiar with under the boasted institutions of his own country. Their simple habits of life, their various amusements, their fandangoes, music, and balls, their sports — and above all their gambling, gave to their listless minds all the exercise they needed. The Church held absolute monopoly of their spiritual guidance and led them in blind obedience along the devious ways of a morality based upon ignorance and superstition. She ministered largely to their temporal pleasures by her numerous fetes and holidays, and at the same time held out to their minds the promise of eternal happiness when this round of pleasure should come to an end.

The allegiance of such a people to such a government could not be strong. Even the dark ignorance in which they lived did not entirely blind them to the fact that their rulers cared more for themselves than for their people. Gleams from the restless fires of liberty that were burning in the outside world now and then shot into the little valley from beyond the mountains, and there was a latent feeling that a better state of affairs ought to exist than their government was able to give. This feeling the later intercourse with the American traders did much to foster, and the American government when it arrived found a people to whom their old allegiance had become a byword, and who were ready to welcome the liberator with open arms.[3]

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[3] "These people are wonderfully improved, I am told, within the last three years, as well in their manners, dress, etc., as in their political advancement. Liberal principles are fast gaining ground and taking deep root and in proportion as these increase, the bigotry and tyranny of the church are weakened." Letter from an American trader dated Santa Fe, Feb. 7, 1826, published in the *Missouri Republican*, April 20, 1826.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

THE SANTA FE TRADE.

HISTORICAL SKETCH.

The Mallet brothers — First commercial expedition — Morrison and La Lande — James Purcell — Manuel Lisa — Pike's expedition — Malgares' expedition — The Spaniard and the American — McKnight, Baird and Chambers — Chouteau and DeMunn — Adventures of D. Meriwether — Termination of Spanish sovereignty in Mexico — Baird, McKnight and Chambers again — William Becknell — Glenn and Fowler — Becknell's second journey — First wagons on the Santa Fe Trail — Expedition of Baird and Chambers, 1822 — Expeditions of 1824 — Becknell on Green river — Expedition of James O. Pattie — Summary of early expeditions — Government survey of road to Santa Fe — Military escorts to the caravans — Major Riley's escort — Obstacles to the trade — Influence of the trade upon the War with Mexico.

PROBABLY the first expedition that ever crossed the country all the way between Santa Fe and the Missouri river was the Spanish military force which was destroyed by the Missouri Indians in 1720. The next was that of the Mallet brothers who in 1739 set out with six companions to go from the French settlements on the Mississippi to the Spanish settlements of New Mexico. They had understood that their route lay by the headwaters of the Missouri and they consequently ascended that stream as far as the Aricara villages, where they learned their mistake. Retracing their steps for a distance they struck across the country to the southwest, passing the Pawnee villages on their way, and arrived at Santa Fe July 22, 1739. On the 1st of May, 1740, they started on their way back. Three of the party returned by way of the Pawnee villages and the rest went down the Arkansas and the Mississippi to New Orleans.

The first known expedition from the upper Mississippi country to the neighborhood of the Spanish settlements near Santa Fe, undertaken strictly for purposes of trade, is described by Captain Amos Stoddard in his *Sketches of Louisiana*. No date is given, but it was before 1763, though probably not long before, for one of the members of the party was still living in 1812. Captain Stoddard's account of the expedition runs thus: "While Louisiana was in the hands of France, some of the French traders from the upper Mississippi transported a quantity of merchandise by way of the Arkansas to the Mexican mountains where they erected a temporary store, and opened a trade with the Indians and likewise with the Spaniards of north Mexico. The Spanish traders at or near Santa Fe, deeming this an infringement of their privileged rights, procured the imprisonment of the Mississippi adventurers, and the seizure of their effects; and demanded punishment and confiscation. The cause was ultimately decided at Havana. The prisoners were liberated and their property restored on the ground that the store in question (situated on the east side of the summit of the mountains, and below the source of the Arkansas) was within the boundaries of Louisiana." From this description it is evident that the "temporary store" was in the neighborhood of the modern city of Pueblo, Colorado, and was therefore the first structure known to have been erected by white men within the limits of the state of Colorado.

During the Spanish regime in upper Louisiana there would seem to have been no reason of a political character why a trade between St. Louis and Santa Fe should not have sprung up. But it did not to any great extent, for there is no record of any expedition either way during this period. There must, however, have been some intercourse, for Lewis and Clark incidentally refer to communication with that country in a way to lead one to suppose that it was not an uncommon thing.

The second commercial expedition of which we have a positive record, occurred almost simultaneously with the transfer of Louisiana to the United States. It was made by William Morrison of Kaskaskia, Illinois, a leading merchant of the Mississippi valley and later a member of the firm of Lisa, Morrison and Menard in 1807, and of the Missouri Fur Company in 1809. In the spring of 1804 Morrison sent one Baptiste La Lande, a French Creole, to find his way to Santa Fe and carry thither a small assortment of goods with a view of ascertaining what kind of a market was to be found there. La Lande traveled by way of the Pawnee villages, ascended the Platte river to the mountains, and then sent some Indians to Santa Fe to see if he would be permitted to visit the town. Some Spaniards came out to meet him and escorted him and his merchandise to the village. He probably reached Santa Fe in the summer or fall of 1804. He told Pike in March, 1807, that he had been there nearly three years. The goods found ready market and La Lande quickly accomplished the purpose of his mission. But he was a long way from home, between which and him intervened many hundreds of miles of desert country and many hundreds of dangerous savages. The dread of these perils was magnified by the Mexicans, who wanted La Lande to stay there. The government also lent its assistance by offering him land, doubtless preferring that he should stay rather than return with reports which would inevitably lead to a renewal of the enterprise. Last, and perhaps most effectual, the influence of female admirers turned the scale of the doubtful adventurer. He shuffled off without apparent compunction his obligation to his employer, appropriated the money to his own use, and decided to make Santa Fe his home.

When Lieutenant Pike left St. Louis on his official expedition to the source of the Red river in 1806 Morrison seized the opportunity to get word, if possible, to Santa Fe, and find out what had become of La Lande, and he placed his claims against La Lande in Pike's hands. Later Pike made this commission an occasion for sending an emissary to

Santa Fe; but, as the student of Western history knows, he was himself escorted thither, *vi et armis,* and had an opportunity to press the claim in person. In fact, La Lande was sent to him in the character of a spy to draw from him the motives of his visit to the Spanish frontier. But Pike quickly fathomed his design and treated the renegade so unceremoniously that he was fain to beat a precipitate retreat from the presence of the irate officer.

This is about all we know of La Lande. Pike endeavored to secure satisfaction of Morrison's claim, but without success, and the faithless fellow was left in congenial company among his adopted compatriots.

Less than a year after the arrival of La Lande in Santa Fe, or in June, 1805, James Purcell, a native of Bardstown, Kentucky, arrived. In 1802 with two companions he left St. Louis to hunt among the Osage Indians, and when about to depart by way of the Arkansas river for New Orleans. was robbed of his furs by a band of Kansas Indians. Purcell and his companions recovered their property by dint of daring performances which excited the admiration of the Indians and even of some of the traders who happened to be in the vicinity. The little party now undertook to reach St. Louis, but ill luck seemed to pursue them, for they lost all their furs in the Missouri river near the mouth of the Kansas. Here they met a trader on his way up the river to the Mandan Indians and Purcell joined his expedition. Upon arriving at their destination Purcell was dispatched to the southwest to trade with the plains Indians in the valley of the Platte. In the spring of 1805 the bands of Indians with whom he was wandering were driven into the Bayou Salade where the South Platte finds its source. The Indians, who knew that they were not far from the Spanish settlements, sent Purcell to get permission to come in and trade. He arrived in June, 1805, and liked the situation so well that he did not even return with the Indian deputies to notify the parties who had sent him of the success of the errand.

Purcell remained in Santa Fe for many years thereafter. Up to the time of Pike's arrival he had been pursuing his trade of carpenter to great profit except, as he assured Pike, when working for officers. He was held under pretty strict surveillance, was forbidden to write, and narrowly escaped capital punishment for having unwittingly violated the local law by making some gunpowder. But on the whole he found the new situation agreeable and decided to make Santa Fe his future home.[1]

In 1806 there was being organized at St. Louis by a prominent trader a project for trade with Santa Fe. The scheme was to form a large depot among the Osages, and then at the proper time to push on with an escort of friendly Indians to within "three or four days' travel of the Spanish settlements." Leaving the main party with the goods under guard of the friendly Indians, the leader was to go to Santa Fe with a few well-selected articles and try to get permission to bring in his entire outfit. If not successful he was to induce as many Spaniards as possible to go back with him and trade at his camp.

Nothing more was ever heard of the venture, and it is known to us only through a letter of instruction from General Wilkinson to Lieutenant Pike, dated August 6, 1806. In this letter Wilkinson takes strong ground against the enterprise and urges Pike to do all in his power to frustrate it. The name of this enterprising trader is not mentioned. but it is thought to be Manuel Lisa.[2] The surmise is very probably correct, for nothing could have been more natural than that Lisa should have undertaken such a venture. He was already in relations with William Morrison, who had sent La Lande to Santa Fe, and who was anxious to learn the fate of that expedition. But if it was Lisa that gentleman's attention was soon turned to other fields of activity and his plans never materialized.

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[1] Pike is almost our only authority upon La Lande and Purcell, but I have seen a confirmatory reference to the latter in the *Missouri Intelligencer* of April 10, 1824, which contains an article upon the Navajo Indians by one James Purcell, lately returned from Santa Fe and "for nineteen years a citizen of New Mexico." This confirms the date of his arrival as given by Pike, 1805. The spelling *Purcell* is undoubtedly correct although Pike gives it as Pursley.

[2] So considered by Dr. Elliott Coues in his carefully annotated edition of Pike's Journals, Francis P. Harper, New York, 1895.

The first journey ever made by an officer of the United States government to Santa Fe occurred in 1806-7. Lieutenant Zebulon Montgomery Pike was ordered to visit certain tribes of Indians in the newly-acquired regions to the west and southwest of St. Louis, among them the Comanches, near the sources of the Arkansas and Red rivers, and also to determine the "direction, extent and navigation" of those two streams. It was inevitable that these instructions should take him into Spanish territory and there is strong reason to suspect that he had other instructions, not in writing, that required him to push his explorations much nearer the Spanish capital of Santa Fe than his published orders or his skilful disclaimer in his journal would indicate. No one may ever know whether the trap into which Pike ran, when he built his redoubt on the west bank of the Rio Grande and hoisted the American flag in the very faces of the Spaniards, was a trap set by himself or not; but every circumstance of the expedition indicates that it was all a scheme to get into Santa Fe and learn what he could of the country without having his purpose suspected. Such at any rate was the outcome of the affair. Pike and the remnants of his party, after the terrible experience of the previous winter in the mountains, were marched as prisoners to Santa Fe. Thence, after a brief sojourn, they were taken to Chihuahua, where they were brought before the governor. They were then permitted to return home, which they did via Natchitoches on the Red river, where they arrived July 1, 1807.

It is not the purpose here to give any detailed account of this celebrated expedition. It has been dealt with in the most exhaustive manner by the latest editor of Pike's Journals, Dr. Elliott Coues, and does not come within the program of the present work further than to show its relations to the development of the Santa Fe trade. Pike brought back the first definite information which had yet been received in the United States concerning the commercial and political condition of this Spanish province, and his expedition had unquestionably a large influence in inducing traders to look in that direction for profitable adventure.

It is an interesting coincidence that almost simultaneously with the United States exploring expedition into Spanish territory there took place a much more formidable one from Santa Fe far into United States territory. The Spanish expedition consisted of one hundred dragoons of the regular army and five hundred mounted militia, with two extra horses and a mule to each man and ammunition for six months. It was commanded by a distinguished Spanish officer, Don Facundo Malgares. It left Santa Fe probably about the middle of June, for that was the date of a commission carried by Malgares to the chief of the Pawnees. The route of the party at first lay down the Canadian, thence northeast to the Arkansas, and from that point to the Pawnee villages where a grand council was held. The expedition then returned to Santa Fe where it arrived in October. The Spaniards could scarcely have been a month ahead of the Americans at the Pawnee villages. Their expedition, according to Pike, was intended to forestall his own, and it is a remarkable instance of the energetic fashion in which a Spaniard could execute an enterprise when he once really set about it.

There is a profound significance in the almost simultaneous presence of these two expeditions upon the boundless prairies that separated the frontier settlements of their respective countries. One was looking into the future and paving a way for the irresistible expansion of his people. The other was clinging to the past and watching with distrustful eye the too rapid progress of a rival power. Both were visiting the wild inhabitants of the plains and seeking with presents and speeches and grandiloquent pictures of the greatness of their respective nations, to secure their attachment. In this preliminary skirmish between two powers, which were even then, did they but know it, preparing the way for inevitable conflict, the advantage was on the side of the Spaniard. Between the powerful and well-appointed expedition of Malgares and the small and poorly-equipped handful of men with Pike the contrast was great, and to the untutored mind of the prairie inhabitant there could be no doubt of the outcome of a trial of strength between their governments. He could not see the forces behind these outward manifestations — the expanding vigor of a young nation and the decadent energies of the old; but in due time he came to know.

It was not until several years after Pike's return that attempts were renewed to open a trade with Santa Fe — at least no records of such attempts have come down to us. Public attention had been strongly attracted to the upper Missouri by the return of Lewis and Clark. All the leading St. Louis traders had united in a company to prosecute the trade in that region, and for the time being the southwest dropped out of consideration.[3]

The next expedition to Santa Fe of which there is any record took place in 1812. It was composed of twelve men, the leaders of the enterprise being Robert McKnight, James Baird and Samuel Chambers. They were induced to undertake the journey in the belief that Spanish authority in New Mexico was overthrown by the revolutionary chief Hidalgo, and that they should find the baneful customs and regulations which were practically prohibitive of foreign trade, removed. Their hopes were doomed not only to disappointment, but to a reality exactly the reverse of what they expected. The Hidalgo movement had failed, the chief had been executed, and the Spanish authorities, intensely suspicious of foreigners and especially of Americans, seized the traders immediately upon their arrival, sent them to Chihuahua and put them in prison. Here they remained upwards of nine years, or until the revolutionary movement finally succeeded under Iturbide, when they were set at liberty. Mr. John McKnight, brother of the trader, went to New Mexico to find his brother in 1821 and both returned with several other traders in September, 1822.[4] Baird also returned in 1822 while Chambers made his way down the Canadian in the fall of 1821.

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[3] In November, 1809, three men by the names of Smith, McClanahan and Patterson, under the guidance of a Spaniard, Manuel Blanco, left St. Louis for Santa Fe. Nothing further is known of them.—*Missouri Gazette*, October, 1810.

The next expedition to Santa Fe, so far as is known, occurred in 1815-17. In the summer of 1815, Mr. A. P. Chouteau and Julius De Munn of St. Louis formed a partnership for the purpose of trading on the upper Arkansas. They left St. Louis on the 10th of September, "in company with Mr. Phillebert, a trader, who had gone to the mountains the year before, and who had come back to get a supply of goods to enable him to buy horses to bring in his furs."[5] On their way to the mountains Chouteau and De Munn purchased Phillebert's entire outfit and the time of his men. Phillebert had appointed Huerfano creek, a branch of the Arkansas, as a rendezvous for his men, but when his party arrived there, December 8, 1815, they learned from some Indians that the men, despairing of Phillebert's return, and being destitute of necessaries, had taken everything with them and had gone over to the Spaniards. It was accordingly decided that De Munn should go after them. He found the men at Taos, where they had been well treated, and upon going to Santa Fe to see the governor he was himself very well received at the capital. This favorable reception induced De Munn to seek permission to trap on the headwaters of the Rio Grande, which he had observed to abound in beaver. The governor had not authority to grant permission but promised to recommend it to his government. Not being able to wait for a reply, De Munn went back, taking his engagés from Taos, and returned to Chouteau's camp on the Huerfano. It was there decided that De Munn should return to St. Louis for an additional equipment. He accordingly set out on the 27th of February, 1816, with Phillebert and one man and reached St. Louis in forty-six days.

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[4] This disgraceful affair will always remain a blot upon the history of American diplomacy.

[5] See Part IV., Chapter I.

De Munn, with a new outfit and party, left St. Louis July 15, and returned to the mouth of the Kansas river, where he met Chouteau, who had agreed to come there with the winter's hunt. Chouteau, on his way down, had had a severe fight with the Pawnees in which he had lost one man and had killed several of the Indians. After dispatching the furs to St. Louis Chouteau and De Munn returned to the mountains with a party of forty-five men. The hunters went on to the Sangre de Cristo mountains while De Munn started for Santa Fe to see if the governor had yet received authority for the Americans to hunt upon Spanish territory. He was disappointed to learn, before he reached Santa Fe, that there had been a change of governors and that the new incumbent was ill-disposed to his interests. He was not even permitted to visit the capital, but was ordered with all his people to withdraw from the Spanish dominions. De Munn returned with his party and all turned north to the headwaters of the Arkansas, where they remained during the fall and winter.

It was then planned to start early in the spring and make a hunt on the headwaters of the Columbia; but still hoping for some favorable concession from the Spaniards which would enable them to pursue their adventures in their present neighborhood, De Munn made another trip to Taos. He found things most unfavorable. The authorities pretended to have information that there were a fort and twenty thousand men on the Arkansas, and De Munn, instead of returning with the desired concession, was escorted back by two hundred armed men who were ordered to cause all caches to be raised, to investigate the question of the fort and armed force, and if nothing of that sort should be found, to conduct the traders a distance down the Arkansas, and then let them go back to St. Louis. After a long train of negotiations and an examination of the territory in question, it was finally agreed that the party might be allowed to remain on the north side of the river.

An attempt was made in the spring of 1817 to reach the Columbia by crossing the mountains of Colorado, but the snow would not permit, and the season being now far advanced, it was decided that Chouteau should remain on the headwaters of the Arkansas and Platte for another year and that De Munn should return to St. Louis with the furs.

Descending from the mountains to a place where a quantity of furs had been cached, both Chouteau and De Munn made preparations for the latter's departure for St. Louis. May 23rd, 1817, was fixed as the date of departure. Unluckily it rained hard that day and prevented the start and on the 24th a force of Spanish troops appeared with orders to escort the whole party to Santa Fe. This was accordingly done, and all the furs and property of the traders were confiscated. The party were thrown into prison and for a time even confined in irons. After forty-eight days' imprisonment they were tried by court-martial and sentenced to leave the dominions of Spain, forfeiting all their property except one horse each. The party returned to St. Louis, where they arrived early in September.[*]

Thus, after three years of the arduous toil of a trapper's life, these courageous adventurers had the satisfaction of seeing the whole fruit of their labors swept away in an instant. After their return to the United States a formal application for relief in the sum of about thirty thousand dollars was made to the United States government. The claim was favorably reported upon, but whether ever paid or not does not appear.

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[*] *Missouri Gazette*, Sept. 13, 1817. "Mr. Auguste Chouteau, Mr. De Munn and companions, after 48 days' confinement in the prison of Santa Fe, returned last Sunday to their rejoicing families and friends."

For the circumstances of the Santa Fe court-martial see infra Chapter XXXI., *Incidents of the Trail.*

The outrageous treatment of Chouteau and De Munn, and the knowledge that a party of Americans were even then languishing in the dungeons of Chihuahua, seems to have deterred further adventure in that direction until the overthrow of Spanish power in Mexico in 1821. There is some evidence, however, that parties must have gone to Santa Fe during these years, for otherwise it is difficult to see upon what the *St. Louis Inquirer* of September, 1822, could have based the remark that "it is becoming a familiar operation for our citizens to visit this capital." The only actual record of such a journey during these years that has come to our notice is that of a Mr. D. Meriwether, an Indian trader, who in 1819 accompanied a war party of Pawnees as far as to the Spanish frontier. Here they encountered a Spanish force by which the Pawnees were utterly defeated and Meriwether was taken prisoner, carried to Santa Fe, and placed in confinement. Over thirty years afterward he returned to the place of his imprisonment as governor of New Mexico.

The period of Spanish dominion in New Mexico, which terminated in 1821, was thus marked by total failure on the part of American traders to gain any foothold in the Santa Fe trade, and the commerce of the prairies, which was soon to attain such large proportions, can not be said to have yet begun.

The first effect of the change of form of government in New Mexico was favorable to the American traders, who were thereafter permitted to visit Santa Fe. As soon as the news of successful revolution reached the United States, John McKnight, brother of the unfortunate trader who, with James Baird, Samuel Chambers and others, had now been prisoners in Mexico for nine years, started for Chihuahua to see if he could not secure his brother's release. Whether as a result of this effort or not, the whole party were set at liberty and returned to the United States. Chambers went home by way of the Canadian river in the fall of 1821. Baird and the McKnight brothers returned by way of Santa Fe. Upon their arrival at Taos they fell in with a party under two traders by the names of Hugh Glenn and Jacob Fowler, who had come out from the States the previous autumn and were now about to return.[7] Joining this party June 1, 1822, they reached home in July following.

To William Becknell, of Missouri, belongs the honor of being the founder of the Santa Fe trade and the father of the Santa Fe Trail. It was he who took the first successful trading expedition to Santa Fe. He first passed along the general route later followed and he was the first to take wagons over the route. In the *Missouri Intelligencer* of Franklin, Missouri, June 10, 1822, Becknell had an advertisement calling for a company of seventy men "to go westward for the purpose of trading for horses and mules and catching wild animals of every description." Although Santa Fe is not mentioned, it is difficult to conceive of any other place "westward" where mules could be traded for. Thither in fact the party was bound. They rendezvoused at the home of Ezekiel Williams (of "*Lost Trappers*" fame) on the 4th of August and crossed the Missouri at Arrow Rock, September 1st. They reached the Arkansas September 24th and Santa Fe November 16th. Becknell's route was up the Arkansas to the mountains where, according to Gregg, it was his intention to remain and trade with the Indians, but having fallen in with a party of Mexicans he was induced to take his outfit to Santa

[7] See infra p. 502.

John McKnight subsequently built a post on the upper Arkansas near which he was killed by the Comanches in 1823. His fort was then abandoned.—*Missouri Intelligencer*, August 12, 1823. Robert McKnight evidently returned in later years to the scene of his long incarceration, for Kit Carson says he hired out to him as teamster in Chihuahua in 1828. Peter's *Province Life and Frontier Adventures*, p. 33.

Fe. Here he sold out at a handsome profit, and on December 13th left San Miguel with a single companion by the name of McLaughlin and reached home January 29th, 1822.

During the same year Jacob Fowler, of Covington, Kentucky, who rejoiced in the title of Major, and Hugh Glenn, of Cincinnati, Ohio, who was known among his acquaintances by the Blue Grass addition of Colonel, made a joint expedition to Santa Fe. Glenn had already established a trading post on the Arkansas river near the mouth of the Verdigris, and hither Major Fowler made his way via Fort Smith early in September, 1821. Colonel Glenn joined the party, which numbered twenty persons, and, possibly by virtue of nominal rank, assumed the command. The start from Glenn's post was on the 21st of September, 1821.

Their course for some time was in the country to the north of the Arkansas, but it came back to that river near the mouth of the Little Arkansas. It then continued up the river to the base of the mountains, where, on the 2nd of January or thereabouts, Colonel Glenn left Fowler with most of the party while he set out with four men for Santa Fe. Nothing was heard from him until the 28th of January when some Spaniards arrived with news of the success of the Mexican Revolution. Glenn sent word that he had met with a very friendly reception at Santa Fe and requested Fowler to proceed there at once with his party, for he had obtained permission to hunt and trap in the Mexican provinces. On the 8th of February, 1822, Fowler arrived in Taos, where he met Colonel Glenn. The Colonel then returned to Santa Fe while Fowler made a spring hunt in the mountains. At some time during the spring they were joined by McKnight's party just from the prisons of Chihuahua, and on the 1st of June they all set out for the United States. On the 12th they met a party under Braxton Cooper on the Arkansas a little east of the present boundary line between Colorado and Kansas. On the 29th of June, near Ottawa, Kansas, they came upon a wagon trail made by William Becknell's party only a short time before. The party reached Fort Osage July 5th, whence they proceeded to St. Louis and Fowler reached his home in Covington, Kentucky, on the 22nd of July.[8]

The favorable report brought back by Becknell in the winter of 1821-22 led to repetitions of the enterprise in the following spring. Both Braxton Cooper and Becknell himself took out expeditions. Cooper set out in the latter part of April, made the journey in safety, and the greater part of the company returned in the following autumn. Becknell left Arrow Rock near Franklin May 22 with twenty-one men and three wagons. Between the Missouri and the Arkansas he was stopped by the Osage Indians, who threatened to confiscate his property, but through the good offices of one of the Chouteaus who was trading with these Indians at the time, he was allowed to proceed.

Upon his arrival at the Arkansas he was joined by the party of a Mr. Heath who is not elsewhere mentioned in the narratives of the times. The journey from the Arkansas to San Miguel, the first Spanish settlement, situated about fifty miles from Santa Fe, consumed twenty-two days. How long Becknell remained in Santa Fe at this time is not known, but the return journey, which took forty-eight days, probably occurred in October and November.

This journey is of historic importance in that it was the first which led directly to San Miguel by way of the Cimarron river instead of following the Arkansas to the mountains; and it was also the first that made use of wagons in the Santa Fe trade. To William Becknell therefore belongs the credit of having made the first regular trading expedition from the Missouri to Santa Fe; of being the first to follow the route direct to San Miguel instead of by way of Taos; and the first to introduce the use of wagons in the trade. This last achievement was four years before Ashley took his wheeled cannon to the Salt Lake valley, eight years before Smith, Jackson and Sublette took wagons to Wind river, and ten years before Bonneville took them to Green river.[9]

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[8] The chief value of the Glenn-Fowler expedition is in the fact that Major Fowler kept a journal, and that this journal has been published under such able editorship as that of Dr. Elliott Coues. With a degree of courage such as few editors would have shown, Dr. Coues has reproduced the preposterous orthography of the original journal with absolute fidelity, and it is probably the best example of poor spelling and punctuation in existence. Apart from its singular appearance the journal has a real value as a contribution of the history of an obscure period. Perhaps the most valuable feature of all is the exhaustive editorial commentary upon topics connected with the expedition. *The Journal of Jacob Fowler.* Elliott Coues. New York, Francis P. Harper, 1898.

In the fall of 1822 James Baird and Samuel Chambers, of the unfortunate party so long imprisoned in Chihuahua, took an expedition consisting of about fifty men from Franklin to Santa Fe. Upon their arrival at the Arkansas they were overtaken by a snow storm of such severity as to compel them to go into winter quarters. They encamped on an island and remained there through a very severe winter, in which all their animals perished. When spring arrived, being unable to transport their goods, they cached them some distance above the island on the north shore. Thence they went to Taos, procured some mules and came back and recovered their property. The spot was thereafter known as the Caches.[10]

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[9] The evidence on this point is conclusive. See *Journal of Jacob Fowler*, p. 167. "We have to leave the wagon [road] we fell into two days back, which road was made by Becknell and his party on their way to the Spanish settlements." This was July 1, 1822. Becknell himself in a letter written in 1825 referred to this year as the time "when I opened the road to Santa Fe." The *Missouri Intelligencer*, Feb. 18, 1823, says: "But one wagon has ever gone from this state to Santa Fe and that was taken by Captain Wm. Becknell . . . in the early part of last spring, and sold there for $700, which cost here $150." This might mean that Becknell lost two wagons on the way, but Becknell's journal indicates that he took all the wagons through. *Niles Register* mistakenly refers to Cooper as having taken the three wagons to Santa Fe, "to the great astonishment of the people." It was, of course, Becknell. Gregg, usually so accurate, evidently errs in saying that Becknell was defeated in his effort to cross the Cimarron desert and had to return to the Arkansas and go by way of Taos. Becknell's Journal makes it plain that he crossed the desert.

[10] See Gregg, *Commerce of the Prairies*, vol. I., p. 67, and *Missouri Intelligencer*, Sept. 3, 1822.

We have the record of but one expedition to Santa Fe in the year 1823, although there were undoubtedly others. This was composed of thirty persons under the command of Colonel Cooper and it left the vicinity of Franklin about May 6th. Each member of the party took two pack horses and two hundred dollars' worth of goods. The party returned in safety in the following October, bringing in four hundred "jacks, jennies and mules," some other live stock and a quantity of furs.[11]

The year 1824 was an eventful one in the history of the Santa Fe trade, for it was marked by an immense increase in the number and activity of those who had entered the rising business. About the 1st of April of that year, in a tavern in the little town of Franklin a company of men assembled to discuss the organization of a Santa Fe expedition. It was to be upon a more extensive scale than any yet undertaken, and it was proposed to make a large use of wagons. The details were arranged and a rendezvous was appointed at Mt. Vernon, Missouri, on May 5th, each man to come equipped with one good rifle, one pistol, four pounds of powder, eight pounds of lead, and twenty days' provisions.

The expedition set out on its long journey May 15, 1824; crossed the Missouri six miles above Franklin on the following day; and on May 23rd arrived at the place of organization "three miles from the settlements." Here the party was organized for crossing the plains. A. Le Grand, well known in frontier history, was elected Captain, and others to the various subordinate offices. Among the party were Mr. Marmaduke, who afterward became governor of Missouri, and Augustus Storrs who next year went out as United States consul to Santa Fe. The expedition consisted of eighty-one men, one hundred and fifty-six horses and mules, twenty-five wagons and about thirty thousand dollars' worth of merchandise. This was the first expedition upon which wagons were extensively used.

The party resumed their journey May 25th, reached the

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[11] *Missouri Intelligencer*, May 13 and Oct. 28, 1823.

Arkansas June 10th, passed San Miguel July 25th and arrived in Santa Fe July 28th. After a successful trade most of the party returned home. They reached Franklin September 24th after an absence of four months and ten days. They brought back as a result of their trade one hundred and eighty thousand dollars in gold and silver and ten thousand dollars' worth of furs. It was one of the most profitable ventures in the history of the Santa Fe trade. Mr. Marmaduke, who kept a diary of the expedition, remained in Santa Fe during the winter and left for home May 31, 1825.[13]

In the fall of 1824 Braxton Cooper took a party to Santa Fe, leaving home in November. He lost two men on the way — one by the name of Wixon, who was murdered by the Osage Indians, and another by the name of Glen Owen, who was killed by the Comanches.

The whereabouts of William Becknell during these two years are not very clear, but it is certain that he was actively engaged in the trade, for we find him in the fall of 1824 making a journey far to the west of Santa Fe. He left Santa Cruz November 5th with nine men and went to Green river (so mentioned specifically) where he remained during the winter. The little party suffered great hardship from hunger and cold. In an account furnished the *Missouri Intelligencer,* June 25, 1825, a week after Becknell's return to the United States, he says: "We subsisted for two days on soup made from the raw hide which we had reserved for soling our moccasins, and the following morning the remains were dished up into hash. The young men employed by me had seen better days and had never before gone supperless to bed nor missed a wholesome and substantial meal at the regular hour except one who was with me when I opened the road to Santa Fe."

In this connection the following account from the *Intelligencer* of April 19, 1825, will be of interest. On the 24th of August, 1824, William Huddart and fourteen men left Taos and traveled west to "Green River (probably the Colorado of the West)" where the party separated, nine of them ascending the river. The others fell in with a trader by the name of Robidoux who had with him five Americans. Two days later they were attacked by the Arapahoes, who killed one man and robbed the rest. Huddart and his five companions then left Robidoux and returned to Taos.

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[13] The data for the foregoing narrative were gleaned from the *Missouri Intelligencer.*

These two items are of especial interest as giving the first known use of the name Green river as applied to the Colorado of the West; for there seems to be no doubt that this was the stream referred to in both instances. It also gives us a clue to the wanderings of that active trader Robidoux who, at a very early day, built a post on the Gunnison river and another in the valley of the Uintah on the farther slope of the Colorado of the West.

An interesting event of the year 1824 was an expedition of twenty-six Spaniards from Santa Fe to Council Bluffs, where, with the aid of Major O'Fallon, Indian Agent, they concluded a treaty with the Pawnees who at that time were the scourge of the traders in the territory of both governments. The Spaniards were greatly pleased with the attentions shown them by Major O'Fallon. They left for Santa Fe on the 11th of August.[13]

The year 1824 witnessed also another expedition, that of James O. Pattie and his father, who left their home on the Gasconade river, Missouri, June 24th with the intention of going up the Missouri river. They were stopped at Council Bluffs on account of having no license and they then decided to join a party under Sylvester Pratte for Santa Fe. They left Council Bluffs July 30th, went first to the Pawnee villages on the Loup, thence south to the Arkansas, and thence via Taos to Santa Fe, where they arrived on the 5th of November. The career of the Patties for the six years thereafter was mainly in the far southwest, in New Mexico, Arizona and California, and does not fall within the scope of this work. The younger Pattie afterward published an interesting account of his adventures under the title of *The Personal Narrative of James O. Pattie*. It is a faithful work, in very simple style, almost pathetic in its details of misfortune, and forms one of the many indictments of Spanish inhumanity toward Americans during those early years.

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[13] *Missouri Intelligencer*, Sept. 25, 1824.

The year 1825 was also one of great activity in the Santa Fe trade. It is not, however, necessary to follow in minute detail, as in the preceding years, the comings and goings of the now frequent expeditions. The interest which always attaches to the beginnings of any enterprise justifies a descent to the minutest circumstances which may elucidate its history; but this is no longer the case where such beginnings have grown into a regular routine. Henceforth it will be necessary to present only those features which stand forth with unusual prominence, relegating to the condensed summary of a footnote the details of the several expeditions.[14]

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[14] 1825 — Becknell returned from Santa Fe June 1.— Marmaduke left Santa Fe May 31; date of arrival in Franklin not known. — Another party left Santa Fe in June arriving in Franklin August 1 with 500 mules and horses; pursued usual route; went from San Miguel to Canadian; down this stream 300 miles; thence N. E. to Arkansas at mouth of Little Arkansas; thence through Osage country home; were roughly handled by Osages.— May 16, large party, 105 men, 34 wagons, 240 mules and horses, Augustus Storrs, newly appointed consul to Santa Fe, Captain, left Fort Osage for Santa Fe; party returned by detachments at various times and by different routes during fall; a number, among them Storrs, remained. — Another caravan left in May with 81 men, 200 horses and $30,000 worth of goods; no further record. — A party of Tennesseeans left Jackson, Tenn., for Santa Fe in April; returned as far as Arkansas river with some of the above parties and then continued down that stream.

1826 — Early in April a party arrived in Franklin from Santa Fe. About same time party of 100 left for Santa Fe. — About June 1, another party of between 80 and 100 persons, "with wagons and carriages of every description" left Franklin for Santa Fe. — June 9, "six or seven new and substantial wagons" laden with goods arrived in Franklin en route for Santa Fe; owned by Mexican, Mr. Escudero, who was in charge of them. This was about the beginning of Mexican proprietor-

It was in the year 1824 that the question of marking the road to Santa Fe and of providing a military escort for the caravans began to be agitated. Senator Thomas H. Benton of Missouri succeeded in getting an appropriation of ten thousand dollars for marking the road and twenty thousand dollars for securing the right of transit from the Indians

ship in trade which monopolized more than half the business in 1843.— It appears that in September of this year a party under Ceran St. Vrain (if we may trust Inman) set out for Santa Fe, arriving there in November; in this party was a runaway boy, Kit Carson, then 17 years old.

1827 — Spring caravan from Franklin had 52 wagons and 105 men; Ezekiel Williams, captain; Augustus Storrs and David Workman along; the largest party yet; the only outgoing expedition mentioned, but of course there were others; about 60 of the party returned about Sept. 30, with 800 head of stock, valued at $28,000; absent four months; cleared 40 per cent. — May 31, a party returned from Santa Fe successful.—July 19, a party of twenty arrived two days before from Santa Fe with several hundred mules and $30,000 specie.

1828. — About 1st of May caravan left Franklin for Santa Fe with $150,000 worth of merchandise and 150 persons. — May 18, a party was at Blue Springs en route to Santa Fe, with 37 wagons, and $41,000 worth of goods; September 12, 70 to 80 persons arrived in Franklin from Santa Fe; venture profitable, but lost two men, Munroe and McNees. — Oct. 28, party of 25 arrived in Franklin from Santa Fe; had been attacked by Indians who stole all their animals; killed John Means of Franklin, and compelled them to cache their specie.— Bent's Fort erected this year; according to some authorities, the following year.

1829. — Spring caravan consisted of about 70 persons and 35 wagons; Charles Bent captain; military escort under Major Riley; Samuel C. Lamme killed en route; return cargo valued at $34,000; reached Franklin early in November.— There seems to have been no other caravan this year.

1830. — About May 22, party of 120 with 60 wagons left Franklin for Santa Fe, returning in October with fair profits.

1831. — May 15, large party, of which Josiah Gregg was a member, numbering nearly 200 and including some ladies, 100 wagons, two small cannon, and $200,000 worth of goods, left Independence, Mo., and having organized at Council Grove, left that place May 27; crossed the Arkansas June 13, and arrived at San Miguel in due course. — May 21st there was preparing at Franklin a large party for Santa Fe with about $200,000 worth of goods. — Some of the members had put their across their territories. A commission was appointed consisting of Benjamin Reeves, George C. Sibley and Thomas Mather. Their work began in 1825 and continued for three years. The necessary concessions were secured from the Indians and the road was surveyed from Fort Osage to Taos.

entire property in the venture. — One of above parties returned, in October, after a successful trip.—October 20 a party of twenty-five or thirty persons passed Columbia, Mo., for Santa Fe, mostly from Eastern states. It was this year that Smith, Jackson and Sublette made their unfortunate journey across the plains in which Smith lost his life.

1832. — Principal caravan under Charles Bent; date of departure not given; returned about November 1st, with $100,000 specie and $90,000 other property.—A party returning in the fall and winter of this year attacked by Indians on Canadian January 1 and lost all their property and one man.

1833. — June 20, spring caravan at Diamond Grove, 184 men, 93 wagons, under Charles Bent; November 9, 100 of above party returned with $100,000 specie and large amount of other property. — Gregg returned this fall.

1834.—May 24, caravan of about 125 wagons; Gregg probably with it; part of caravan under Captain Kerr left Santa Fe September 10, arrived home in October, 140 men and 40 wagons with returns amounting to over $200,000.

The record of the caravans during the following years is very obscure, although it is certain that they continued as heretofore. — Various causes contributed to the deficiency of record. Of all the authorities relied on in this note the *Missouri Intelligencer* is the most important, and next are the St. Louis papers and the *Niles Register*. The *Missouri Intelligencer* and *Boone's Lick Advertiser* began its career in Franklin, where the Santa Fe trade had its origin and for a full decade its headquarters. As the trade was at that time peculiarly an industry of the country around Franklin the local paper kept a close account of its doings. June 29, 1826, the paper was transferred to Fayette in the same county but back from the river, and four years later, May 4, 1830, it was removed to Columbia, Missouri. As its habitat was moved away from the river it became less in touch with the Santa Fe trade. The trade itself gradually transferred its headquarters to Independence, Missouri, which by 1830 had become the main starting point. This town had no paper, and reports of events at so great a distance often failed to be made. While, therefore, we should expect that the later records would be the more complete, they are in reality less so.

Troubles with the Indians, resulting in frequent robberies and occasional loss of life, early led to appeals for government protection. A military post on the boundary line was at first proposed, but this idea was abandoned on account of the difficulty of supply and the fact that the garrison would be of little use except in its immediate vicinity. In 1829 the experiment of an escort was tried. Major Bennett Riley[15] with four companies of the 6th Infantry was detailed from Fort Leavenworth to accompany the spring caravan to the frontier. He set out June 5th and joined the caravan a few days later at Round Grove. The expedition proceeded without incident to the Arkansas and up this stream to the vicinity of Chouteau Island. As the road here turned off to the Cimarron and lay on Mexican soil, the United States troops could go no farther. This was about the middle of July.

Scarcely had the caravan disappeared on the other side of the river when some horsemen came riding back furiously and announced that it had been attacked and one of its number killed. Major Riley at once crossed the river and hastened to their relief. He then escorted them for a day longer, but knowing the serious nature of an armed march into foreign territory without permission, he determined to go no farther. The caravan had become so panic-stricken by the recent event that about half of them resolved to abandon the trip and remain with the troops, but they were shamed out of their purpose.

Major Riley then returned to the neighborhood of Chouteau Island and went into summer camp, having agreed to await the caravan's return until October 10th. He had a hard summer of it, being frequently annoyed by the Indians, and several incidents of thrilling interest enlivened the long stay in the barren and uninteresting region. Finally the 10th of October arrived and brought no caravan. Major Riley decided to wait one day longer. No one appearing by the morning of the 11th, a parting salute was fired and the troops set out for home. But scarcely had they gotten under way when some horsemen overtook them and announced that the caravan was at hand. A halt was made immediately. The caravan was found to be accompanied by an escort of Mexican troops under Colonel Viscara, Inspector General of the Mexican army. It had had a sharp brush with the Indians a few days before[10] in which Viscara came near losing his life. The escort was hospitably received by the American troops; the officers were feasted as well as the limited resources would permit, and a review was had in their honor.

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[15] A distinguished officer whose name is perpetuated in "Fort Riley," an important military post in central Kansas.

It was a remarkable scene — this gathering of the military forces of two nations in protection of an international commerce. It was moreover one of the most heterogeneous gatherings conceivable, for the Santa Fe caravans embraced every class and condition of men to be found in the frontier settlements of either country. Never, since the days when Coronado penetrated to the Kansas plains, had the barren and treeless prairies witnessed a more interesting spectacle. Three days were spent in this agreeable intercourse, and on the 14th of October the caravan, after bidding farewell to its Mexican escort, placed itself under the protection of the national troops and took up its march for home.

The policy of furnishing escorts for the caravans did not commend itself to the authorities. The large caravans were amply able to protect themselves if they exercised reasonable caution, while it was of course impossible to furnish an escort for every little band that might choose to make the trip. Moreover the escort could only go to the frontier and had to stop at the very point where the danger was greatest. Unless a Mexican escort were there to meet the caravan it was of very little use to provide protection over the least dangerous half of the way. The experiment of 1829 was therefore not often repeated. In 1834 an escort of sixty dragoons under Captain Wharton accompanied the caravan;

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[10] See p. 551.

but this, according to Gregg, was the last one until 1843.

The trade pursued the even tenor of its course during these years with little of incident or note except the never-ending troubles at the custom house. But the situation of affairs, as regarded the provincial government, became less and less satisfactory. Mexico was falling into the same habit of suspicion and jealousy that had been so fatal to commercial intercourse during the Spanish regime. From their point of view there may have been some cause for this feeling. The onward march of American settlement they conceived to be fraught with great danger to their own authority in the northern provinces. Already Texas was as good as lost and the same might soon prove true of New Mexico. There was consequently a growing opposition among the Santa Fe authorities to a continuance of the trade, although it was always popular with the people.

The ephemeral insurrection of 1837 which for a short time subverted Mexican authority bore hard on the American traders, for they were suspected, though apparently without foundation, of complicity in this movement. The various Texan-Santa Fe expeditions, so injudiciously managed, were another great annoyance to the trade; for here again the authorities believed that the traders were privy to the plans of the Texans. Consideration of these interesting events is foreign to the purpose of this work; and belongs rather to the history of those great political changes which were about to come over this region. The lamentable tragedies to which they gave rise burned deeply into the public mind in the United States and went far to justify the sweeping conquest which followed so shortly after.

This brief sketch of the Santa Fe trade prior to 1843 would be incomplete if we omitted to refer to its supreme importance in the war which was even then (1843) gathering like a storm on the prairies. The long intercourse of twenty years had made our people thoroughly familiar with the routes, distances, character of country, and the people to be encountered in military operations in that quarter. The interchange of commerce had made the New Mexicans better acquainted with our people, had created a friendly feeling towards them, and had effectually paved the way for the change of allegiance that was soon to follow.

CHAPTER XXIX.

THE SANTA FE TRADE.

CHARACTER OF THE BUSINESS.

Commercial isolation of Santa Fe — Origin of the trade — Franklin "cradle" of the Santa Fe trade — Independence and Westport — nds of merchandise used — Character of return cargo — Magnitude the trade — Profits — Small proprietors — Further statements as to gnitude of the trade — The Santa Fe caravans — Organization at uncil Grove — Progress of the caravan — Arrival at Santa Fe — acing the goods on sale — Customs regulations — Armigo's duty on gons.

IN 1830 the following item appeared in a paper published in western Missouri:[1] "The inland trade between e United States and Mexico is increasing rapidly. This perhaps one of the most curious species of foreign inter- urse which the ingenuity and enterprise of American aders ever originated. The extent of country which the aravans traverse, the long journeys they have to make, the vers and morasses to cross, the prairies, the forests and l but African deserts to penetrate — require the most eel-formed constitutions and the most energetic minds. he accounts of these inland expeditions remind one of the aravans of the East. . . . The dangers which both ncounter—the caravan of the East and that of the West— re equally numerous and equally alarming. Men of high hivalric and somewhat romantic natures are requisite for oth."

This singular business, the "*Commerce of the Prairies,*" as unique in American history and owed its origin to the ondition of commercial isolation which existed in New

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[1] *Missouri Intelligencer*, Feb. 12, 1830.

Mexico prior to the coming of the Americans. In spite of the extreme paucity of geographical knowledge of the country between New Mexico and the Missouri in the earlier years of the century, in spite also of the jealous surveillance of the Spanish government over the domestic affairs of her colonies, and the careful exclusion of all knowledge concerning them from the outside world, certain facts had become known to the American merchants of St. Louis and the settlements along the lower Missouri. It was clear that the Missouri river near the mouth of the Kansas was much nearer to Santa Fe than was Vera Cruz, whence all imported fabrics reached that inland town. Inasmuch as there was continuous navigation from American and foreign ports to St. Louis and even to the mouth of the Kansas, nearly three hundred miles farther west, it was an obvious proposition that traders from the Missouri could import goods to Santa Fe more cheaply than the Mexicans themselves by way of Vera Cruz. The only uncertainty in the matter related to the duties which the Spaniards might levy upon imports. If these were reasonable, then it was evident that the advantage of trade would lie with the Americans. These considerations led to attempts, as early as 1804, to open trade relations between St. Louis and Santa Fe. They were renewed at intervals, but always unsuccessfully, until the overthrow of Spanish power in Mexico. The trade then began to develop rapidly into a flourishing commerce which continued with little interruption until Santa Fe became an American city. It will be considered here in reference to the character of the traffic, the method of conducting the caravans and the conditions encountered in Santa Fe.

"The town of Franklin on the Missouri river . . . seems truly to have been the cradle of our trade," says Josiah Gregg, the historian of the Santa Fe Trail. Franklin was the first town of importance in the celebrated tract of western Missouri known as Boone's Lick. It has now been entirely washed into the river, while on the opposite shore has arisen the thriving town of Boonville. At the time when the Santa

Fe trade commenced, Franklin was the most important town of Missouri west of St. Louis, and the first to establish a newspaper. It was two hundred and five miles by river above the mouth of the Missouri and one hundred and eighty-seven below the mouth of the Kansas. The earlier expeditions to Santa Fe, after 1820, nearly all started from this locality, and were made by residents of the Boone's Lick country. But as the trade grew in importance, as steamboats began to ascend the Missouri, and particularly as traders from other points began to engage in the trade, the starting place was gradually transferred to that point on the Missouri which was nearest to Santa Fe. Independence, Missouri, near the mouth of the Kansas, began to be an outfitting point as early as 1827. In the course of the next six years the Missouri river destroyed the steamboat landing and the boats had to go farther up where there was a convenient and permanent bank. Here arose Westport landing, and a few miles back, Westport itself, which from that time began to draw a share of the outfitting trade from Independence. By 1831 Franklin had almost entirely lost its hold as the starting place for the caravans, which thenceforth was permanently fixed in the neighborhood of the mouth of the Kansas. The trail to the mountains also started from this point and the growing volume of the mountain trade still further augmented the importance of this early rendezvous.

The goods taken to Santa Fe in trade comprised almost every variety that are made use of in every day life. There were dry goods, silks, hardwares, calicoes, velvets, drillings, shirtings, etc.; but domestic cottons constituted fully half the cargo. The trade extended beyond Santa Fe, and in later years a large portion of it was carried to Chihuahua, and some even to California. From this last region were brought horses and mules which thus found their way from the distant Pacific to the Mississippi valley and possibly even farther east. The furs from the Colorado mountains were frequently brought in by way of the Trail either by traders who had purchased them, or by the trappers who joined the caravans for protection. The most important item in the return cargo was specie, both gold and silver, which was transported in large quantities to the States.

The magnitude of the Santa Fe trade at one time rose to about four hundred and fifty thousand dollars per annum. For the twenty-two years from 1822 to 1843 inclusive, it averaged over one hundred and thirty thousand dollars, or nearly three millions for the period. The following table, which is the only complete summary of the trade ever prepared, was compiled by Josiah Gregg, the most competent authority who has treated of the subject. It gives the estimated value of the merchandise invested in the trade, the proportion taken to other points than Santa Fe, and the number of men, wagons, and proprietors for each year. The value of the goods is that of the Eastern markets where they were purchased.

Years.	Amount of Mdse.	Wagons.	Men.	Proprietors.	Taken to other points than Santa Fe.	Remarks.
1822	$ 15,000		70	60		Pack animals only used [except Becknell's wagons].
1823	12,000		50	30		Pack animals only used.
1824	35,000	26	100	80	$ 3,000	do. and wagons.
1825	65,000	37	130	90	5,000	do. do.
1826	90,000	60	100	70	7,000	Wagons only henceforth.
1827	85,000	55	90	50	8,000	
1828	150,000	100	200	80	20,000	3 men killed, being the first.
1829	60,000	30	50	20	5,000	U. S. escort. 1 trader killed.
1830	120,000	70	140	60	20,000	First oxen used by traders.
1831	250,000	130	320	80	80,000	Two men killed.
1832	140,000	70	150	40	50,000	Party defeated on Canadian. Two men killed, 3 perished.
1833	180,000	105	185	60	80,000	
1834	150,000	80	160	50	70,000	2nd U. S. escort.
1835	140,000	75	140	40	70,000	
1836	130,000	75	135	35	60,000	
1837	150,000	80	160	35	80,000	
1838	90,000	50	100	20	40,000	
1839	250,000	130	250	40	100,000	Arkansas expedition.
1840	50,000	30	60	5	10,000	Chihuahua expedition.
1841	150,000	60	100	12	80,000	Texan-Santa Fe expedition.
1842	160,000	70	120	15	90,000	
1843	450,000	230	350	30	300,000	3rd U. S. escort. Ports closed.

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In a business of so hazardous and uncertain a character the profits must necessarily have been large to justify a pursuit of it. The goods were mostly bought in Eastern markets, and were sold at a great advance, often more than one hundred per cent upon the first cost. But by the time that the sales were accomplished and the various expenses and losses in transporting them so far were deducted, the net profits rarely exceeded forty per cent, and were frequently as low as ten per cent. There were of course occasional instances of actual loss.

A striking characteristic of the Santa Fe trade was its division among a great number of proprietors. The above table shows to what a degree this was true and only in the later years did the investments average as much as one thousand dollars per proprietor. It was a business of small dealers, and no "American Fur Company" followed the Santa Fe Trail. Not infrequently individuals took with them all they possessed, and as the enterprises were generally profitable the trade was undoubtedly a great benefit. Often individuals would secure credits by mortgages upon their property until their return in the fall. If, as occasionally happened, the Santa Fe market proved dull, and it required considerable time to get rid of one's cargo by retail, these home obligations enforced a resort to the less profitable method by wholesale in order that the business might terminate in time for the trader to get back home and satisfy his creditors.[2]

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[2] The following letter is from a distinguished Santa Fe trader and plainsman, a partner of the no less distinguished Bent brothers. It is an example of the practice already alluded to:

SAN FERNANDO DEL TAOS, Sept. 14, 1830.

MESSRS. B. PRATTE & Co.

Gentlemen:—It is with pleasure that I inform you of my last arrival at Santafe which was the 4th of August. we were met at Red river by General Biscusa the customhouse officer and a few soldiers, the object in coming out so far to meet us was to prevent smuggling and it had the desired effeck, there was a guard placed around our wagons until we entered Santafe, we had all to pay full dutys which amounts to about 60 percent on cost. I was the first that put goods in the Customhouse and I opened immediately, but goods sold very slow, so

While there is no reason to doubt the substantial accuracy of the figures heretofore given concerning the Santa Fe trade, there were those at the time who ridiculed its importance, as there are those who ridicule every movement which the enterprise of man sets on foot. To give a fair hearing to both sides, however, the following comments will be of value. They are the substance of a spirited protest which appeared in the *Missouri Republican* of St. Louis, February 16, 1830, against a statement which had been made upon the floor of Congress that the trade of 1829 had amounted to two hundred thousand dollars and was deserving of government protection. The writer had procured an estimate from those who alone knew anything about it, with the result that one

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slow that it was discouraging. I found that it was impossible to meet my payments if I continued retaling. I there fore thought it was best to hole Saile & I have done so. I send you by Mr. Andru Carson and Lavoise Ruel one wagon eleven mules, one horse and 653 skins of Beaver, 961 lbs. nine hundred and sixty one pounds, which you will have sold for my account. I do not wish the mules sold unless they sell for a good price.

. . . .

I am with much respect
Your obdt. servt.
Ceran St. Vrain."

The following observations by Nathaniel J. Wyeth *(Sources of the History of Oregon*, p. 119) are to the same purpose: "The following statement is my view of the Santa Fee business, derived however from superficial observation. viz.:

First cost of goods carried to St. Fee and duties paid the Mexican government	$100,000
Outfits and expenses on same	50,000
Profits and interests in the States between the importer and the St. Fee trader	25,000
	$175,000
Returns made from St. Fee in Specie and Beaver	$200,000
Profits remaining to the St. Fee traders	$ 25,000

"This is, I presume, about the result of the trade. The goods are carried to St. Fee by about 30 distinct traders in about 75 wagons. The largest trader has rarely more than 12 wagons. More than one-half of these people are farmers and buy their goods on 12 months and often mortgage their farms and consequently are obliged to make returns the same year."

hundred and thirty-three thousand dollars and nine hundred of the twelve hundred mules which were brought back belonged to Spanish refugees who were with the caravan and were daily expecting a decree for their return. The specie amounted to between twenty and thirty thousand dollars, about twice the cost of the military escort, which did not prevent the loss of an estimable trader who was killed by the Indians. The furs belonged mostly to traders who came in with the caravan for protection and whose property represented the fruit of two or three years' toil. "A majority of the traders invest in the trade from $100 to $600; these *capitalists* live cheaply upon buffalo meat, and improve their habits and morals among the, in every way, vicious and lascivious inhabitants of Santa Fe. . . . *It will not be denied* that most of the traders are professedly smugglers. Others deceive the ignorance, or overcome by bribes the conscientious scruples, of the custom house officer, the agents of the republic of Mexico. Ought this trade to be protected by the government"?

Nevertheless the trade was one of considerable magnitude and genuine importance. It was as honestly conducted as any business could be which had to do with Spanish officials. It was an unquestioned blessing to the isolated community penned up in the mountains and it was a source of revenue to a great many worthy American citizens. So important had it become to the New Mexicans that when a decree prohibiting it was promulgated in 1843, Gregg predicted that, unless the decree were speedily withdrawn, revolution would follow.

The most interesting feature of the Santa Fe trade was that which related to the long journey over the plains. The distance from Independence to Santa Fe was over seven hundred miles, and except for the last fifty miles, no permanent abode of civilized man greeted the eye of the traveler. Much of the intervening territory was prairie country, some of it a barren, sandy, trackless desert, where lack of water was an ever-present peril. All of it, except a narrow strip at either end, was infested with some of the most treacherous and restless Indians to be found west of the Mississippi. So real were the perils of these long journeys that it was extremely hazardous for small parties to undertake them alone. The traders early formed the practice of banding together for mutual protection, over at least the most dangerous part of the journey. Hence arose the custom of forming caravans which every year crossed the plains in each direction.

The traders, being of a very independent class, were averse to sinking their individuality in a general organization except when danger positively compelled it; and they therefore deferred the caravan formation to the latest possible moment. From Independence they set off by themselves and went on in this way one hundred and fifty miles to Council Grove. Here, for many years, the caravans were organized, for beyond this point attacks might be looked for from the savages.

The first step in the organization was to select officers. In the larger caravans the list was quite extensive, including captain, 1st and 2nd lieutenants, marshal, clerk, pilot, court (three members), commander of guards, and a chaplain. For captain it was customary to select an experienced plainsman, bold and fearless, yet of cool judgment. These qualities, however, were rarely so conspicuous as to indicate any one man for exclusive choice, and as a result there was a goodly amount of electioneering. The American of the plains could not shake off the training of his native country, and these elections usually proceeded by the most approved American methods. "One would have supposed," says Gregg, "that electioneering and party spirit would hardly have penetrated so far into the wilderness; but so it was. Even in our little community we had our office-seekers and their political adherents, as earnest and devoted as any of the modern school of politicians in the midst of civilization."

Not only in the work of effecting an organization, but in the organization itself, the patriotic trader patterned after the institutions of his beloved country. Augustus Storrs, referring to the expedition of 1827, says: "Our government is almost as complete and perfect as though we composed a republican government; we can never forget the blessings of our own institutions; and I have no doubt that the longer we are absent the more forcibly this idea will occur to us." In truth, the fires of patriotism burned ever brightly on the prairies and in the mountains, and no wandering band was so benighted as to forget to render honor to the institutions of their country wherever the anniversary of its natal day overtook them. Upon such occasions the entire resources of the party were called into requisition — artillery (when there was any), oratory, and games of skill — while the celebration was rounded off in true prairie style with the most ample feast and frolic which buffalo meat and alcohol could produce.

The authority of the captain was very limited, and his orders were obeyed only according to the whim of the individual, who generally considered himself as good a captain as any one. There was a notable absence of anything like discipline except in the matter of guards, and the captain's functions were practically limited to fixing hours of starting and stopping and the location of camp. The result was that these organizations were always subject to greater danger from the Indians than would be a similar body of troops. Although the members were generally armed, there was no system of inspection to compel them to keep their arms in order, and they were likely to be found *hors de combat* when suddenly required for use.

The caravans, if large, were organized into divisions, each under charge of a sub-officer whose duty it was to superintend the details of the march, select the best creek crossings, and look after the arrangements for the evening camp. Guard duty was relentlessly enforced, and no members of the party, except officers and invalids, were exempt.

The composition of the caravans was the most heterogeneous imaginable. The vehicles consisted of heavy wagons, carts, and light carriages. There were occasionally elegant outfits on the road. "It has the air of romance," says an early writer, "to see splendid pleasure carriages with elegant horses journeying to the Republic of Mexico! Yet it is sober fact." The draught animals were horses, mules, and oxen. There were always a large number of saddle-horses. In personnel the caravans were composed of all sorts. There was first the plain man of business, intent only on the prosecution of his enterprise. There were the rough denizens of the plains who, in long years of living in these unsettled wilds, had become half Indian in dress, habits, and general appearance. There were pleasure-seekers, health-seekers, scientific travelers, and now and then ladies. Then there was always the picturesque Mexican with a dress peculiarly his own, even when, as was generally to some extent the case, there was a marked absence of any dress. The equipment of the party was likewise of no common pattern, and there were as many varieties of dress, saddles and fire-arms as there were of men, wagons, and animals. "The wild and motley aspect of the caravan," as Gregg well observes, "would have formed an excellent subject for an artist's pencil."

The progress of these huge caravans was always slow, and rarely averaged more than fifteen miles a day. The location of springs and creeks determined the length of march, for water could not be found wherever wanted. At night the caravans were generally parked in some form suited to the ground and the necessities of defense. The danger from Indians was always a serious one to small parties, but never to large ones, except when small groups were carelessly permitted to get away from the support of the main body. Gregg says that "in the course of twenty years since the commencement of this trade I do not believe there have been a dozen deaths upon the Santa Fe route, even including those who have been killed off by disease as well as by the Indians." While this may have been strictly true of the Santa Fe traders, it is certain that the casualties upon the plains among the smaller parties greatly exceeded this number.

The scene of bustle and confusion during the hasty preparation of each morning for the day's march, when animals were being saddled or harnessed, fastened to the wagons, and everything gotten ready for the start, was something to be long remembered by those who had once seen it. As a general thing the best of spirits prevailed among the party and there was a friendly rivalry not to be the last in the performance of duty. All writers agree that the sight of these huge caravans in motion was a most interesting one — truly American in its individuality, variety and independence. The line, when in single file, often stretched out for more than a mile in length. At other times, upon the broad, even prairies, where the whole country was one vast road, the caravan would form in three or four parallel columns, thus giving the appearance of greater compactness and strength. The motion of this large body, with the scattering groups of horsemen on its flanks or in advance, the shouting of the drivers, the incessant cracking of the whips, and the jolting and creaking of the wagons all combined to form a medley of sights and sounds that never failed to excite the enthusiasm of the beholder.

The election of officers having taken place at Council Grove, every one exerted himself to get into the best possible state of preparation for the long journey that lay before him. The goods, perhaps, required repacking, and the greatest ingenuity was shown in placing the packages in the wagons so that they would not jolt with the constant shaking of the several hundred miles of travel.[8] Wood was gathered from the ample supply in Council Grove and strapped underneath the wagons for use in case of breakages. Over the tops and sides of the cargoes were spread sheets of thick canvas to resist rain in the driving storms of the prairies.

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[8] The transportation on pack animals of such a substance as specie would naturally seem to be very difficult; but the ingenuity of the trader hit upon a most effectual method. The specie was placed in large bags made of fresh bull hide. It was then shaken down as compactly as possible and the bag was sewed tightly together. The shrinkage of the hide as it dried out compacted the contents so as to make almost a rigid mass.

The caravan, upon arrival in the buffalo country, subsisted largely upon game, and the universal testimony is that these long journeys were health restorers which might have rivaled the fabulous fountains of youth which so appealed to the credulity of the early Spanish adventurers. The only really serious problem of subsistence en route related to provision for water in crossing the Cimarron desert. There were stretches of the journey where from one to four days had to be passed without water, depending upon the speed of the traveler and his knowledge of the location of springs. All the later caravans carried enough water with them from the Arkansas to get them safely through this region.

The first evidence of approach to the Spanish settlements would usually be the meeting of some lonely Cibolero or Mexican buffalo hunter. The picturesque costumes of these denizens of the prairies was in itself an attraction that made the meeting of more than passing interest, but the fact that they brought news from Santa Fe made their welcome one of genuine enthusiasm. The great subject of inquiry from these prairie news agents was the state of the custom house administration, for upon this depended in no slight degree the success or failure of the enterprise. A few of the most experienced traders generally posted ahead as soon as it was safe to leave the caravan, in order to arrange all this troublesome business in advance of the main arrival.

The entry of the caravan into Santa Fe was of course an event of very lively interest. The long sojourn in the uninhabited prairies was in itself enough to make an approach to civilized abodes a matter of no ordinary importance. It was the end of a long and tedious journey, and the beginning of a long and luxurious rest; for the life of the caravan employes while in Santa Fe was a continuous round of conviviality. Before entering the city every one, even to the lowest employe, did his best to improve his personal appearance. He subjected his hair and beard to such barbering as the rude conveniences of the plains afforded and made himself as irresistible as possible in the eyes of the dusky maidens of Santa Fe. Even the animals, as Gregg observes, caught the spirit of the occasion and however much they might have lagged of late, now pricked up their ears and bent forward under their heavy loads with quick and elastic step.

The joy of these sun-browned travelers was reciprocated by the inhabitants of Santa Fe, to whom the caravan was like the arrival of a ship at some solitary island of the sea. Pouring out into the streets they would announce the event with shouts of "The wagons! The Americans! The arrival of the caravan"! And at once, in a spirit of fraternity which knows no frontier lines or national jealousies, they would join with their American visitors in joyous celebration of the event.

The traders attended at once to the serious business of their visit. The goods were entered at the custom house with the least possible delay and were then exhibited for sale. They were generally closed out at retail, but it often became necessary in a dull market to sell in bulk in order to get ready for the return caravan. Many of the traders were compelled to stay more than a season and often went to other points, so that the return caravans were rarely more than half as large as the outgoing.

The Santa Fe end of the business was thoroughly characteristic of the government and people of that country. Both the Spanish and Mexican authorities always exhibited a jealousy of their northern neighbors that would gladly have interdicted the trade altogether, but that the extreme isolation of the remote northern province made commerce with the United States almost indispensable to the domestic welfare of the people. while it was a source of considerable revenue to the government. The customs restrictions upon the trade were always heavy, often capricious, and were a never-ending source of annoyance to the traders. They were the subject of most anxious inquiry as the caravans approached Santa Fe, for changes might have transpired since the latest information which would make or ruin an enterprise. The extreme venality of the custom house officers led to all kinds of peculation and bribery, and it has been estimated that not more than one-half of the revenue receipts found their way to the public treasury. It was a common saying that the duties on American goods went one third to the traders, one third to the officials and one third to the government. Between smuggling and bribery the trader must have felt that he had left behind him in his native land all semblance of virtue in the transaction of business.

In 1839 Governor Armigo conceived the brilliant idea that, by placing an arbitrary impost on each wagon that entered the territory, regardless of its cargo, he would avoid the official corruption and smuggling which diverted from its proper destination so much of the revenue. This impost he fixed at five hundred dollars. But however carefully he may have figured out the proper amount to charge, he totally failed to foresee the consequences of his act. Traders at once increased enormously the size of the wagon loads by using stronger wagons and more teams to each, rejecting largely the bulky coarse stuffs of small value and loading with fine fabrics of higher value. The impost was thus made to operate as a great reduction of the former tariff and was quickly abrogated by the governor.

The customs regulations which had shifted about so often in the course of twenty years, and which had already excluded many articles of great importance to the trade, finally in 1843 prohibited the trade altogether. It was a blind and fatal error, an expiring effort to stay the tide of destiny. It only served to make the people of New Mexico more dissatisfied with so capricious and oppressive a government and caused them to accept with greater readiness the always difficult change from one sovereignty to another.

CHAPTER XXX.

THE SANTA FE TRADE.

THE TRAIL.

General Description — The Cimarron Desert — Mountain branch of the Trail — Government survey of the road — Work of Surveyor Brown — Location of the Trail — Other routes to Santa Fe — Itinerary of the Trail — Council Grove — The Arkansas river — Pawnee Rock — Kit Carson — The Caches — Chouteau Island — The Cimarron Desert — Bent's Fort — Bent and St. Vrain — Josiah Gregg.

THE historic highway known as the Santa Fe Trail, along which the "commerce of the prairies" was carried from 1820 to the advent of the railroad, extended from Independence on the Missouri, near the mouth of the Kansas, to Santa Fe, the capital of New Mexico. Both in its origin and destination, however, the trade extended beyond these points. Most of the American traders started from St. Louis or Franklin, while they frequently went beyond Santa Fe to Chihuahua or other towns. But the term Santa Fe Trail did not apply to these extensions. It referred only to the route across the broad, uninhabited region between the frontier settlements of the two countries. It lay half in American and half in Spanish territory, for the ford of the Arkansas, where the boundary was crossed, was almost exactly midway between the two termini.

It will repay one for the trouble of examining the map to note how little this route varied from a straight line. It is remarkable that the traders should so soon have found so direct a route, and it is a striking example of how accurately the instinct of direction will lead one through an unknown country. Far more direct is it than the "Santa Fe route" of today which whirls the comfortable traveler over this distance in one-twentieth of the time on the old Trail. They were good road surveyors — these old explorers of the plains and mountains.

There were four distinct stages of the journey between Independence and Santa Fe. The first extended to Council Grove where the caravans were organized. It was all in a well-watered prairie country, comparatively safe from Indian depredations, and was the pleasantest part of the route. The next division extended to the ford of the Arkansas. It was near the beginning of this stage that the country began to change geologically, botanically, and climatically. It was the transition from the humid prairies of eastern Kansas to the arid plains of the West — from the regions safe from Indian depredations to those where the Pawnee and Comanche made the traveler's life a burden. It was thus the line between ease, pleasure and safety, and toil, difficulty and danger.

The third division of the route was the most dangerous and dreaded of all. It was the Cimarron desert, and extended from the Arkansas river to the source of the Cimarron. Wislizenus thus describes it: "The high plain between the Arkansas and the Cimarron, whose elevation above the sea is about three thousand feet, is the most desolate part of the whole Santa Fe road, and the first adventurers in the Santa Fe trade stood many severe trials here. Within the distance of sixty-six miles from the Arkansas to the lower springs of the Cimarron there is not one water course or water pool to be depended upon during the dry season. The soil is generally dry and hard; the vegetation is poor and scarcely anything grows there except some short and parched buffalo grass and some cacti." It was here that the tantalizing mirage was seen in greater perfection than anywhere else in the plains. To add to the natural difficulty of the situation the Indians were here most dangerous and there was greater loss of life than upon any other portion of the Trail.

So inconspicuous and uncertain were the landmarks of this region that in the earliest years there was great danger of getting lost in crossing it; while the terrible effects of thirst tended to unsettle the equanimity of the traveler and hasten dangers which were near enough at best. The sad death of Jedediah S. Smith in the spring of 1831 resulted from this cause. As these perils came to be more fully understood, provision was made beforehand to avert them. A full supply of water for both man and beast was laid in for about two days' steady travel, and no reliance was placed upon the country until this inhospitable region was crossed.

The fourth division of the journey lay between the Cimarron desert and Santa Fe. Although the road still ran through a barren and worthless country, it was now in the foothills of the mountains, where there were landmarks for guidance and streams enough for camps. Traveling was therefore safe if proper precaution were taken against the Indians.

When expeditions first began to be made from Missouri to Santa Fe they ascended the Arkansas to the vicinity of where La Junta, Colorado, now stands, and then turning south, went first to Taos and then to Santa Fe. Even after the shorter trail was established across the desert, the route by the upper Arkansas continued to be used; for there was always a large amount of trade from that section. Bent's Fort was the great stopping place on this branch of the Trail.

As the Santa Fe trade began to assume large proportions, government aid was sought in protecting the caravans and in locating a road. On the 14th of December, 1824, Senator Thomas H. Benton, who took a great interest in the Far West, presented a petition to Congress reciting the nature, magnitude, and importance of the Santa Fe trade, and praying that the government would endeavor to secure from the Indians the right of undisturbed passage through their lands, and that it would establish a military post on the Arkansas at the point where the Trail crossed it. The subject was energetically pressed during that session of Congress and resulted in an appropriation of ten thousand dollars for marking the line of a road from the Missouri frontier to New Mexico, and one of twenty thousand dollars for securing concessions from the Indians.

In accordance with the law a commission consisting of Benjamin Reeves, George C. Sibley, and Thomas Mather, with a surveyor by the name of J. C. Brown, set out in June, 1825, to execute the work. The survey was made by chain and compass with sextant observations for latitude and longitude. The line as surveyed followed the Trail pretty closely until after it left the Cimarron river where it bore off to the westward and terminated at Taos. The memoir accompanying the maps of the survey states that the road was "surveyed and marked" from Fort Osage to Taos, but this would seem to be wrong. As far as the Arkansas river it was plainly marked with raised mounds, but beyond this point, if marked at all, it must have been in so temporary a way that the evidence of it quickly disappeared.

The great mistake made in this survey was in attempting to force travelers to take any but the shortest practicable route. It is always a dangerous experiment to ignore that tendency of human nature, and of the American type in particular, to take the short cut. Knowing the perils of the Cimarron desert Brown thought it better to ascend the Arkansas to Chouteau Island and then go straight south to the lower spring of the Cimarron, which could be reached in one day. But it was traveling two sides of a triangle where it was possible to follow the third, and the traders preferred to take their chances by the shorter route. In like manner Brown thought it better for travelers to go first to Taos because that was the "nearest of the Mexican settlements, the most northern and the most abundant in provision for man and beast." He accordingly turned off to the right at a point some distance beyond the head of the Cimarron and made straight for Taos. But here again the traders refused to follow him.

From a practical point of view the survey was thus of little use; but it was a substantial contribution, or would have been if published, to the geographical knowledge of the West. The survey was carefully executed, was extremely accurate, and was mapped in conjunction with descriptive notes in a most convenient method. Had the government published these notes exactly in the form in which they were written, which could have been done at very slight expense, they would have made a succinct guide book of the Trail sufficient for all requirements down to the day of railroads. It is an instance almost without parallel where the government, after doing a really useful piece of work, has pigeonholed it in perpetuity, and deprived the public of any benefit from it.

As in the case of the Oregon Trail it is not easy to locate with precision upon modern maps the line of the Santa Fe Trail through the cultivated sections to the eastward of the Arkansas river. The land surveys have thrown the roads into the four cardinal directions. The railroads follow the old line more closely, although by no means exactly. The names no longer mark the precise localities then designated by them, but more than likely have been transferred to neighboring railway stations or the sites of towns near by. Thus it results that if the old Trail could be spread down like a ribbon over the farms and fences of fertile Kansas it would lie mostly where no road now goes. It is possible nevertheless to locate it within narrow limits and point out the modern places near which it lay — so near in fact that from any neighboring church steeple one could overlook the route along which the motley caravans wended their way some seventy years ago.

While the line of travel specifically known as the Santa Fe Trail was that here described, it must not be supposed that it was the only route, or that it was followed rigidly throughout all its course. It was not an uncommon thing for parties both on the main trail and the mountain branch to pass by way of Taos. Numerous parties followed the Arkansas to and from Little Rock or Fort Smith and did not go by way of Independence at all. In 1839 Gregg left Van Buren, Arkansas, and followed the general course of the Canadian until he reached the main trail. On the return route he kept still more to the south. In 1840 the experiment was tried of going direct to Chihuahua from Red river across the present state of Texas. None of these experimental routes gained any permanency.

Attempts to simplify the problem of transportation led to numerous absurd schemes. One man secured a concession giving him the exclusive right to navigate the Rio Grande, and doubtless imagined that a vast fortune would fall to him when his boats should carry merchandise to Santa Fe along that dusty stream, and put to rout the antiquated caravans of the plains. Another party made an importunate appeal to Congress to remove the "raft" in the Red river, for if this obstruction could be removed, of the practicability of which he said there could be no doubt, the "Red river will then become navigable for steamboats of moderate size to within sixty miles of Santa Fe, whence it will be easy to go in barges twenty-four leagues farther," or twelve miles beyond Santa Fe! There is no evidence that the caravan route ever took any measures to forestall this threatened competition.

In 1830 a man by the name of Wolfskill opened a route from Taos to southern California, passing north of the Grand Cañon of the Colorado of the West. A considerable trade developed along this line, and even in these early days goods were carried from the United States to the shores of the Pacific, while the mules of that region found their way in considerable numbers to the valley of the Mississippi.

With this general description of the Santa Fe Trail we pass to a detailed itinerary of the route.

Leaving Independence, the next place of importance on the Trail was

Blue Camp, 20 miles, "a charming spot on the western boundary of Missouri. Situated thus at the very junction of civilization and the wilderness we could overlook them both with a single glance." (Wislizenus.)

Round Grove, or *Lone Elm Tree,* 35 miles. A regular stopping place and also something of a rendezvous.

Oregon Trail Junction, 43 miles. Here in the naked prairie stood a sign post with the inscription "Road to Oregon."

Black Jack Point, 47 miles. So called from the dwarfish oak trees found here.

The Narrows, 65 miles, "a narrow ridge which separates the Osage and Kansas waters." (Gregg).

110-Mile Creek, 100 miles. "The name of this creek refers to its distance from the old Fort Osage." (Wislizenus.)

Bridge Creek, 108 miles.

Switzler's Creek, 116 miles. "Fine running water."

Then followed numerous creek crossings, headwaters of the Osage, but of no special distinction until the crossing of the Neosho is reached at

Council Grove, 150 miles. One of the most important stations on the Trail. There was at this point a thickly-wooded bottom, half a mile to a mile in width, and of indefinite length, lying along the river and affording a great variety of excellent timber. The name was given by the Santa Fe Road Commission of 1825. It was here that the commissioners met the Osage Indians in council and secured their agreement to the unmolested passage of the American and Mexican traders through their country. The name was in honor of this event. It fitted in admirably with the part this timbered locality afterward played in the history of the Trail. The caravans usually came thus far in detached parties and here met in council and organized for the perilous journey across the plains. It was generally supposed that the name arose from this circumstance.

The line of the Trail thus far may be approximately laid down in terms of modern geography. Leaving Independence, Missouri, it bore distinctly southwest and crossed the state boundary just east of the village of Glenn, Kansas. Thence it continued southwest, passing a little to the north of the towns of Olathe and Gardner in Johnson county. It then ran nearly west close to the divide between the waters of the Kansas and Osage rivers and near the towns of Baldwin, Worden and Baden in Douglas county; Overbrook, Scranton, and Burlingame in Osage county; Wilmington in Wabaunsee, Waushara and Agnes in Lyon, and thence to Council Grove in Morris county.

After leaving Council Grove, the next landmark of note was

Diamond Spring, 165 miles, "a crystal fountain discharging itself into a small brook, to which, in recent years, caravans have sometimes advanced before organizing." (Gregg). The "Diamond of the Plains, a remarkably fine large fountain near which is good camping ground." (Brown).

The road now passes in succession the following points:

Lost Spring, 180 miles.

Cottonwood Creek, 192 miles.

Turkey Creek, 217 miles.

Little Arkansas, 234 miles.

Cow Creek, 254 miles, and finally arrives at

The Arkansas river, 270 miles. This stream, which for all its length west of the 100th meridian was the frontier between the United States and Spanish territories, was one of great importance to the traders in this region. It was not a navigable stream in this part of its course, unless the possibility of descending it in light craft in flood time entitles it to that distinction. Its importance arose in part from the fact of its being the national frontier, and in part because the country about its headwaters was a rich trapping territory.

Between Council Grove and the Arkansas the Trail, if laid down upon a modern map, would pass the town of Helmick in Morris county; thence a little north of the modern Diamond Springs and Burdick in the same county, and a little south of Lost Spring in Marion. It would cross the Cottonwood river near Durham and pass close by Canton, Galba, McPherson and Conway in McPherson county. It would cross the Little Arkansas below Little river in Rick county, and continuing past Lyons and Chase in the same county, would reach the Arkansas near Ellinwood, Barton county.

The road now turns up the left bank of the Arkansas and passes

Walnut Creek, 278 miles, and

Pawnee Rock, 293 miles. This rock was to the Santa Fe Trail what Independence Rock was to the Oregon Trail. It was composed of ferruginous sandstone and rose about twenty feet high upon the right hand side of the Trail, some two miles back from the river. It was a great place for inscriptions both by the whites and Indians. "Here was a confused medley of cognomens," says Sage, "English, French, Spanish, German, Irish, Scotch — all entered upon the register of fancied immortality." Not a few names were recorded there that have found a permanent place in Western history. The name of the rock, according to Cooke, "came from a siege there, once upon a time, of a small party of Pawnees by the Comanche hordes; the rocky mound was impregnable; but alas for valor! they were parched with thirst, and the shining river glided in their sight through green meadows! They drank their horses' blood, and vowed to Wah-Condah that their fates should be one. Death before slavery! Finally in a desperate effort to cut their way to liberty, they all met heroic death; ushering their spirits with defiant shouts to the very threshold of the happy hunting grounds! The Comanches, after their melancholy success, were full of admiration and erected on the summit a small pyramid which we see to this day." [1]

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[1] Inman in his *Stories of the Santa Fe Trail,* published in 1881, and again in his *Santa Fe Trail,* 1897, endeavors to glorify his friend, Kit Carson, by connecting an adventure in the life of that noted frontiersman with the christening of this rock. But while the story is a good

Proceeding up the valley of the Arkansas the next point noted in the itinerary of the Trail is

Ash Creek, 297 miles.

Pawnee Fork, 303 miles.

Coon Creek, 336 miles.

"*The Caches,*" 372 miles, so named from an incident elsewhere related which occurred in 1822 when Baird and Chambers were compelled to cache their goods there. Gregg informs us that in his time "few travelers passed this way without visiting these mossy pits, many of which remain to the present day." The Caches were a little west of the point where the 100th meridian crossed the river, and consequently the first point of note after reaching the Mexican frontier. Their location was five miles west of where Dodge City, Kansas, now stands. The ground where they were excavated has mostly caved into the river.

The Ford of the Arkansas, 392 miles. This was the regular crossing after 1829 and was known as the Cimarron crossing. Its location is twenty miles above Dodge City. It was a little more than half way between Independence and Santa Fe.

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one and may have happened somewhere, it did not happen where or when Inman says. It is singular that so noted a character as Kit Carson should be so entirely unknown in the annals of the fur trade as he actually was. His name occurs only once in the correspondence or newspaper literature prior to 1843 so far as it has fallen under our observation. This reference is an interesting one and positively fixes the year in which he commenced his wild west career. It was in 1826 when he joined a Santa Fe caravan under Charles Bent. The *Missouri Intelligencer* of October 12, 1826, had the following notice relating to the event: "Notice: To whom it may concern: That Christopher Carson, a boy about sixteen years old, small of his age, but thick set, light hair, ran away from the subscriber, living in Franklin, Howard Co., Mo., to whom he had been bound to learn the saddler's trade, on or about the first day of September last. He is supposed to have made his way toward the upper part of the state. All persons are notified not to harbor, support or subsist said boy under penalty of the law. One cent reward will be given to any person who will bring back the said boy. (signed) David Workman, Franklin, Oct. 6, 1826."

There was another, or *Lower Crossing*, seventeen miles below Dodge City. It was near the mouth of Mulberry creek at the extreme point of the large southern bend of the river.

The *Upper Ford* of the Arkansas, which was in use as late as 1829, was located at *Chouteau Island*, just above where the town of Hartland, Kansas, now stands. This was the crossing recommended by surveyor Brown in 1825-7 and was the nearest point on the Arkansas to the lower spring of the Cimarron which lay directly south.

Chouteau Island was a well-known point on the upper Arkansas. The name dates from the Chouteau-De Munn expedition of 1815-17. While on his way to the Missouri in the spring of 1816 with the furs collected during the previous winter, Chouteau was attacked by a war party of two hundred Pawnees and lost one man killed and three wounded. He retreated to an island in the Arkansas where he could more effectually defend himself and the name arose from this incident. Chouteau did not have any trading post here, as asserted by some authorities.

The principal danger in crossing the Arkansas was that of quicksands. Unless the party happened along during the June rise, the water offered no obstacles whatever. But the river bottom was treacherous. It was customary to double the teams, and it was imperative not to stop while crossing, lest the heavy loads sink immediately so deep that the teams could not start them.

After crossing the Arkansas, the route lay on Mexican soil. Resuming the itinerary at the Cimarron Crossing the first point of interest south of the Arkansas was the

Battle ground, 407 miles. The name arose at the very end of the period of which we are treating, when a small band of Texans defeated the van guard of Armigo's army, only to be disarmed in turn a little later by United States troops.

Cimarron River, Lower Spring, 450 miles. This stream, far from being a river, was ordinarily no stream at all.

There was no water in its bed in the dry season except at the springs.

This part of the route was most dreaded of all. The distance, fifty-eight miles, required at least two, and more often three, days to traverse, and there was no water on the way. In the earlier years the route was very uncertain for the wagons made no impression on the hard dry soil and no trail was developed. This fact, and a total absence of landmarks, made the danger of getting lost a very serious one, for in that waterless country a day or two of lost time might prove disastrous. This difficulty was removed in 1834 by a fortunate circumstance. It happened that year, quite unusually, that there were continuous and heavy rains while the caravan was passing this part of the route. The wagons cut a distinct furrow on the softened turf which was followed by subsequent caravans until it developed into a permanent road. It is visible in many places to the present day.

This part of the Trail passed near the localities now known by the names of Example, Ivanhoe, Conductor, and Zyonville in southwestern Kansas. The route then ascended the valley of the Cimarron for a distance of eighty-five miles. The points of interest were

Middle Spring of the Cimarron, 486 miles.

Willow Bar, 512 miles.

Between Willow Bar and Upper Spring was another "battle ground" so named from a skirmish between General Viscara and the Indians in 1829 when he was escorting the caravan from Santa Fe to the Arkansas.

Upper Spring, 530 miles.

Cold Spring, 535 miles. At this point the road left the valley of the Cimarron.

McNees' Creek, 560 miles, the site of a melancholy tragedy of the Trail. It was here that Munroe and McNees were attacked and McNees was slain in 1828.[1]

Upon leaving the Cimarron it was customary for a caravan to send couriers in advance to spy out the country and ascertain the condition of the custom house business at Santa Fe. From here on there was a plain trail.

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[1] See the following chapter.

Rabbit Ear Creek, 580 miles. This name arose from the fancied resemblance of some hills in the southwest to rabbit's ears. They were a guide to the traveler on this part of the journey. It was near the head of Rabbit Ear Creek that Major Long passed in 1820 in his futile search for the Red river.

Round Mound, 588 miles. A notable landmark and important as a guide before the route became established. The earlier track lay a little south of the mound, but in Gregg's time it was established on the north side. The height of the mound above the plain was six hundred and ten feet and the elevation above sea level 6,655 feet.

Rock Creek, 596 miles.

Point of Rocks, 615 miles.

Rio Colorado, 635 miles, elevation about 6,486 feet. This stream was supposed to be the upper course of Red river until 1820 when Major Long discovered that it was the upper course of the Canadian.

Ocate Creek, 641 miles.

Santa Clara Spring, near *Wagon Mound,* 662 miles. It was here that the mountain branch from Bent's Fort rejoined the main trail.

Rio Mora, 684 miles. Last of the Canadian waters.

Rio Gallinas, 704 miles. The first abode of white men in Gregg's time — a Mexican ranchero — was encountered here. The road was now in a mountainous country.

Ojo de Bernal Spring, 721 miles.

San Miguel, 727 miles, the first settlement of consequence before reaching Santa Fe.

Pecos Village, 750 miles.

SANTA FE, 775 miles.

From the Cimarron river to Santa Clara Spring the geographical nomenclature has not changed much since the Trail was used, for civilization has never taken kindly to these inhospitable wastes. Over much of the distance the old road can still be followed. From near the point where the mountain branch joined the main trail the Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe railroad now follows very closely the old route to Santa Fe.

The principal point on the mountain branch of the Santa Fe Trail was

Bent's Fort,[3] 530 miles. This was in every respect one of the most important situations in the West, and the post ranked with Union, Pierre and Laramie in thoroughness of construction. It was the great cross roads station of the southwest. The north and south route between the Platte river country and Santa Fe, and the east and west route up the Arkansas and into the mountains found this their most natural trading point.

This branch of the Trail crossed the river very nearly where La Junta now stands, and thence ran south, crossing Raton Pass, and joined the main trail at Santa Clara Spring near Mora river. The mountain branch of the Santa Fe Trail has been closely followed by the "Santa Fe route" of the present day.

[3] See list of posts, Appendix F.

Bent and St. Vrain was the name of one of the most important of the fur trading firms. It ranked next to the American Fur Company in the amount of business that it transacted in the period about 1840. It maintained two posts, Bent's Fort, on the Arkansas, sometimes called Fort William, for William Bent, and a post on the South Platte opposite the mouth of St. Vrain Fork.

The Bent family was well known both in St. Louis and throughout the southwest. Silas Bent was born in Massachusetts in 1744; came to St. Louis in 1804; held important offices in St. Louis, and died in 1827. He had seven sons, of whom the most distinguished were William and Charles who built the post on the Arkansas. After the War with Mexico Charles Bent was made governor of New Mexico, but was murdered in Taos soon after. In 1852 William Bent destroyed Bent's Fort and built another farther down stream called Bent's New Fort.

Ceran St. Vrain was also of a family well known in the history of St. Louis. His father came to America in 1770 and in later years moved to St. Louis, where he married and passed the rest of his life.

He died in 1818, leaving five sons, of whom the most distinguished was the one who became the Santa Fe trader. No biographies of either the St. Vrain or the Bent brothers have been written.

A distinguished trader on the Santa Fe Trail was Josiah Gregg, who, like many another, went to the plains for his health, and becoming enamored of the life went into business there. His distinction, however, is rather that of historian than of a trader. It would be a grave omission not to refer more particularly to his splendid work, the *Commerce of the Prairies*. Written by one who was both a student and a practical man of affairs, fond of philosophic speculations yet accustomed to the shrewd ways of business, it is discriminating, comprehensive and free from exaggeration. It is the classic of the Santa Fe Trail, well arranged and admirably written. Although limited in scope, it fills its particular niche so completely that it is entitled to rank as one of the great works of American history.

CHAPTER XXXI.

THE SANTA FE TRADE.

INCIDENTS OF THE TRAIL.

Chouteau and De Munn — Surgery on the Plains — Murder of McNees and Munroe — Death of Captain John Means — Attacks on the Caravan of 1829 — Death of Jedediah S. Smith.

THE Santa Fe trade was not distinguished for thrilling annals, and the greater part of it was as uneventful as the most prosaic modern business. Still it was inevitable that, in the course of twenty years in a country like that over which the caravans passed, incidents of historic note should occur. A few such are presented in this chapter, all of them authentic. They are given in the chronological order of their occurrence.

IMPRISONMENT AND TRIAL OF CHOUTEAU AND DE MUNN.

In May, 1817, Auguste P. Chouteau and Julius De Munn with their party of hunters and trappers were forcibly taken from their encampment on the Arkansas river, escorted to Santa Fe, confined there forty-eight days, part of the time in irons, and then tried and set at liberty, with the forfeiture of all their property. The details of this trial are curious enough to justify repetition. The simple and direct narrative written by De Munn himself can not well be improved upon.

"After forty-eight days' imprisonment," he relates, "we were presented before a courtmartial composed of six members and a president who was the governor himself. [Pedro Maria de Allande.] Only one of the six members appeared to have any information, the others not even knowing how to sign their names. Many questions were asked, but particularly why we had stayed so long in Spanish dominions. I answered that, being on the Arkansas river we did not consider ourselves in the domains of Spain, as we had a license to go as far as the headwaters of said river. The president denied that our government had a right to give such a license, and entered into such a rage that it prevented his speaking, contenting himself with striking his fist several times on the table, saying, 'Gentlemen, we must have this man shot.'

"At such conduct of the president I did not think much of my life, for all the members were terrified in his presence, and unwilling to resist him; on the contrary [were ready] to do anything to please him.

"He talked much of a big river that was the boundary line between the two countries, but did not know its name. When mention was made of the Mississippi he jumped up saying that that was the big river he meant; that Spain had never ceded the west side of it. It may be easy to judge of our feelings to see our lives in the hands of such a man.

"That day the court did not come to any determination, because the president (as I heard him say to Lieutenant de Arce) had forgotten everything he had to say. Next day we were again presented to the court, but as I knew the kind of man we had to deal with, I never attempted to justify myself of any of his false assertions. We were dismissed and Mr. Chouteau and myself put in the same room.

"Half an hour afterward the lieutenant came in with a written sentence; we were forced to kneel down to hear the citure of it, and forced, likewise, to kiss the unjust and iniquitous sentence that deprived harmless men of all they possessed — of the fruits of two years' labors and perils.

"What appears the more extraordinary is that the governor acknowledged to me afterward in the presence of Don Piedro Piero, the deputy of New Mexico to the Cortes, and several others, that we were very innocent men; yet notwithstanding this all our property was kept and we were permitted to come home, each with one of the worst horses we had." [1]

William Waldo is authority for the following anecdote relating to this event: "Chouteau, having been brought up in the city of St. Louis, which in its early history had perhaps more Spanish inhabitants than those of any other nationality, spoke the Spanish language, which enabled him to communicate freely with the authorities and priests [of Santa Fe]. His superior powers of conversation and his courtly address so captivated the Spanish governor that he would frequently have the Colonel carried from the prison to his house to amuse him and entertain him. On one of these occasions, when the governor had favored his visitor with a long catalogue of his numerous benefactions in his behalf, he paused and with great earnestness demanded what more he would have. The Colonel quietly replied 'Mi Libertad, Señor Gobernador!' This so incensed the boastful magistrate that the prisoner was quickly ordered back to his vile cell."[2]

SURGERY ON THE PLAINS.

When the caravan of 1826 was wending its way up the valley of the Arkansas, one of its members, a Mr. Broadus, while in the act of drawing his rifle from the wagon, accidentally discharged it into his arm. The wound was a dangerous one and the man was advised to have his arm amputated at once before mortification should set in. He persistently refused until the wound had become so bad that all hope of doing anything for it was abandoned. In this predicament the man concluded to have the operation performed, and finally got some of the party to undertake it.

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[1] Letter from Julius De Munn to Governor William Clark, dated St. Louis, November 25, 1817. This was before the treaty defining the boundary between Spain and the United States, which was completed in 1819.

[2] MSS. 135, Missouri Historical Society.

It is said that Kit Carson, then on his first trip across th plains, was one of the "surgeons." Their only instrument were a handsaw, a butcher knife and an iron bolt. The sa teeth being too coarse, a finer set were filed on the back "The knife having been whetted keen, and the iron bolt lai upon the fire, they commenced the operation; and in less tim than it takes to tell it, the arm was opened round to the bone which was almost in an instant sawed off; and with the whizzing hot iron the whole stump was so effectually seared as t close the arteries completely. Bandages were now applie and the company proceeded on their journey as though nothing had occurred. The arm commenced healing rapidly an in a few weeks the patient was sound and well." (Gregg.)

MURDER OF M'NEES AND MUNROE.

In the summer of 1828 two men, citizens of Franklin, Missouri, and traders to Santa Fe, were killed on the Trail by the Pawnees while on their return home. Their names were Daniel Munroe and one McNees, a son of Samuel C. McNees, of Franklin. The exact circumstances of their death are not known, but it is supposed that they had lain down to sleep near the caravan and that the Indians stole upon them and shot them with their own guns. McNees was found lifeless and was buried on the banks of a stream which still bears his name. Munroe was still alive and was carried with the caravan upwards of forty miles before he died He was buried in the valley of the Cimarron.

The men were deeply incensed at this outrage and too vengeance on what seems to have been an entirely innocent party. Just as Munroe's funeral ceremonies were concluded a band of six or seven Indians appeared on the other side of the Cimarron. They asked for a parley, but quickly perceived the hostile attitude of the traders and turned about to flee. The traders fired and killed all but one. Thus an act of base murder by the Indians and one of indiscriminate revenge by the whites added another to the catalogue of bar-

barities which has ever characterized the relations of the white man and the Indian.

DEATH OF CAPTAIN JOHN MEANS.

Another fatality occurred in the year 1828 and this time also with a returning party. The date is confirmed by the *Missouri Intelligencer* of October 24, 1828, which states that the company comprised about twenty-five persons. The details of the affair are condensed from Inman, who claims to have them from those who took part in it. The party was a small one consisting of only twenty-one men, one hundred and fifty mules, five wagons and a small amount of specie. At the upper Cimarron springs they were surrounded by a large band of Comanches who ordered the whites to camp with them for the night. They decided that this would be suicidal and resolved to make their way ahead in spite of the Indians. Captain Means, a man named Ellison and another man named Bryant brought up the rear of the wagons. When the Indians saw that the whites were resolved to proceed, they attacked them at once. Ellison and Bryant escaped, but Means was instantly shot down and scalped before life had left his body. The party then continued their route by short stages, constantly beset by the Indians, but escaping with no more disastrous loss than the serious wounding of one of their number. At length they got to such a desperate strait that it was resolved to abandon the wagons and a portion of the specie. Taking whatever property they could with them and about ten thousand dollars specie, they set out quietly at night, and by traveling all the next day and into the following night they reached the Arkansas. Here they cached the rest of their specie to lighten their load. By the time they arrived at Walnut creek they were so exhausted that they despaired of reaching the settlements, and dispatched five of the most able-bodied of their number to Independence for help. A rescue party was immediately formed and sent off after the sufferers, who were picked up, scattered along the Trail, sometimes one in a place, sometimes two, but all on the verge of starvation.

One writer states that the specie was cached on Chouteau Island and that in the following year the party went back with the spring caravan under escort of the United States troops and that Major Riley, from his camp a little below the Island, sent a detachment to help recover the specie; but Cooke, who has left an account of the expedition, makes no mention of it.[8]

ATTACKS ON THE CARAVAN OF 1829.

This was the caravan that was under the escort of United States troops between Council Grove and the ford of the

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[8] I suspect that Inman, who was much better at telling stories than he was at telling facts, has mixed the incident in which Means lost his life with another which is reported in the *Missouri Republican* of March 5, 1833. According to this last authority a number of men arrived in St. Louis from Santa Fe on the 2nd of March of that year. While on their way home with a party of twelve traders they were attacked on the Canadian some two hundred miles from Santa Fe by about two hundred Comanches. The attack occurred about January 1, 1833, and lasted thirty-two hours. A tinner by the name of Pratte was killed while trying to catch a mule at a little distance from camp. The party tied their mules to a tree and intrenched themselves as quickly as possible. During this time a Mr. Mitchell of Boone county was killed. About midnight the party tried to get away, but were driven back. The fight continued all of the next day, by which time the whites had expended all of their ammunition and most of them were wounded. They had almost given up when they were most unexpectedly hailed by the Indians, who told them in Spanish that they might go. It is probable that the Indians had also given up hope of success.

The horses and mules of the whites had all been killed and they were compelled to abandon their property, including about $12,000 of specie. The next day after leaving the battle ground they separated, one part taking the nearest cut to the settlements and the other going down the river. They suffered incredible hardships. It was winter time and most of them were wounded. They were likewise nearly destitute of clothing, and being without ammunition, could not procure food.

The fate of the other division of the party is not known, but evidently none of them were lost.

Arkansas, and under Mexican escort from Santa Fe to the Arkansas on the return trip. The American escort under Major Riley stopped at the ford of the Arkansas and the traders were cautioned to keep close together, as there was no danger so long as they did not permit stragglers to get away from the main party. In culpable disregard of this wholesome precaution several traders rode on in advance, and when in a narrow defile were beset by about fifty Indians. The traders fled precipitately, but one, a Mr. Lamme, who was mounted on a mule, was overtaken and slain. His companions showed very little courage in thus abandoning him when a slight show of resistance would probably have enabled him to escape. The unfortunate trader was a resident of Franklin county, Missouri, and the principal proprietor of the caravan.

The return caravan was escorted to the Arkansas by Mexican troops commanded by Colonel Viscara. While in the valley of the Cimarron they were attacked by the Indians; Cooke says by Arapahoes and Comanches; Gregg says Gros Ventres. A party of about one hundred and twenty Indians approached on foot. The traders were opposed to admitting any friendly intercourse, but Viscara received them amicably and permitted them to camp near by. He promised the traders that the Indians should be disarmed, but they were too sharp for him and most of them retained their weapons. When an opportune moment arrived they sprang up with a frightful yell and commenced the attack. They seemed especially bent on killing the Mexican commander, and one of the chiefs, when only a few feet away, leveled his gun to fire. A Taos Indian, one of the Colonel's bodyguard, seeing his master's danger, sprang in between him and the chief and received the contents of the gun in his own heart. A brother of this Indian sprang like a tiger at the chief and slew him upon the spot. An officer and two of the soldiers were killed but none of the traders were injured. The latter joined with the troops in repulsing the attack, which was easily accomplished, after which the Indians were relentlessly pursued and killed wherever overtaken. It is said that the pursuers displayed true savage barbarity in the vindictive way in which they wreaked vengeance upon these Indians and that they went back to the States with human scalps dangling to their horses' bridles.

THE MELANCHOLY FATE OF JEDEDIAH S. SMITH.

Of all the tragedies of the Santa Fe Trail the most deplorable is that in which this Christian hero of the wilderness met an untimely death on the banks of the thirsty Cimarron. In the spring of 1831 Smith, Jackson and Sublette, having sold their business in the mountains to the Rocky Mountain Fur Company, entered the Santa Fe trade. With a large and costly expedition of some twenty wagons and eighty men, said to have been the finest outfit ever yet sent to Santa Fe, these veteran traders set out, never doubting that their long experience would enable them to cope with the dangers of the route. Everything went well to the ford of the Arkansas, for there was a plain track all the way. But it was very different on the desert waste between the Arkansas and the Cimarron. There was not a person with them who had been over the route before, and they now found themselves in a featureless country with no track of any kind except buffalo trails which crossed each other in the most confusing directions. The alluring mirage deceived and exasperated the men, and after two days of fruitless wanderings, with animals dying and men frantic for water, the condition of things seemed well-nigh desperate. In this emergency Smith declared that he would find water or perish in the attempt. He was a bold and fearless man and unhesitatingly sallied forth alone for the salvation of the caravan. Following a buffalo trail for several miles he came upon the valley of the Cimarron, but only to find it destitute of water. He knew enough of the character of these streams, however, to believe that there was water near the surface, and he accordingly scooped out a little hollow into which, indeed, the water began to collect. Meanwhile some stealthy Comanches, whom Smith had not observed, were stealing upon him, and while he was in the act of stooping down to drink, mortally wounded him with several arrows. He rose and displayed his undaunted spirit in resisting his savage foes to the last, and killed two of them before he expired. The spot where he fell was never precisely known and no grave protects the earthly remains of this Christian and knightly adventurer. A sadder fate or a more heroic victim the parched wastes of the desert never knew.[4]

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[4] Authorities Gregg, Cooke and Waldo.

PART III.

CONTEMPORARY EVENTS CONNECTED WITH THE FUR TRADE.

CHAPTER I.

THE WAR OF 1812.

Effect of the war on the Missouri Fur Trade — Influence upon the Indians — Speech of Big Elk — The work of Manuel Lisa — Commission to treat with the Indians — The "One-eyed" Sioux — Lieutenant Kennedy's journey.

THE War of 1812, so humiliating in many of its phases to American pride, affected the trans-Mississippi fur trade only on the Columbia and the upper Missouri rivers. The irretrievable ruin which it wrought to American interests on the Pacific has been considered in another part of this work. Its effect on the Missouri trade was to curtail its volume in a large degree, both on account of the diminished territory in which it was carried on, and because of the fall of prices due to the uncertainty of the traffic. "Since the Declaration of War," wrote Charles Gratiot to Astor in 1813, "the traders will not receive any [skins] from the Indians, that article having fallen in price." And ten months later he wrote: "In former years, before the war, we could calculate on at least one thousand packs [of buffalo robes] at this time, besides beaver and other different sorts of furs. But from the unsettled situation of the Indians during the war, particularly the last winter, the scarcity of merchandise among them, the dislike the fur traders have to meddle with that article, the kind of monopoly injurious to the Indian trade carried on by the factories of the United States — all these reasons induce me to suppose that it will not be in my power to buy the quantity you want, nor perhaps one-half."

The second and most serious effect of the war was the general unrest of the tribes within reach of border influence, and the imminent danger that the frontier settlements of Missouri would suffer the horrors of an Indian war. There was great reason to fear a general uprising of the upper Missouri tribes, similar to that which embarrassed our government on the headwaters of the Mississippi. British influence was strong among these tribes, and it was certain that no efforts would be spared to make the most of it, now that the two countries were at war. Long before the outbreak of hostilities British emissaries were evidently making ready for it. "Your Excellency will remember," wrote Manuel Lisa to Governor Clark in 1817, "that more than a year before the war broke out I gave you intelligence that the wampum was carrying [being carried] by British influence along the banks of the Missouri, and that all the nations of this great river were incited to join the universal confederacy then setting on foot."

The conditions were particularly favorable for such a conspiracy. By an almost uninterrupted series of misfortunes the Missouri Fur Company, the only important American organization which had yet attempted to carry its business into the region of the upper Missouri, had been practically driven from that field. It was impossible that this ill success, as compared with the progress of the British companies, should not draw upon the American traders the contempt of the Indians; and when the Americans finally withdrew altogether from the Missouri above Council Bluffs the British felt that their opportunity had arrived. How great was this danger may be inferred from an incident which occurred after the close of the war, at a general council of the chiefs of the Mississippi and Missouri tribes held at Portage des

Sioux in the summer of 1815. Big Elk, the Omaha chief, made a speech on that occasion which left little doubt as to the character of the influence that had penetrated even as far as to that peaceful tribe. He said, in part, addressing General Clark, "Last winter when you sent your word and presents by Captain Manuel Lisa, which he gave us from our Great Father, in the night one of the whites (he was once your son) wanted my young men to rise. He told them that their blankets were dung and the strouds rotten, and if they wanted good presents, to cross to the British for good clothing. This man was Baptiste Dorion. . . . When I was at the Pawnees, I wanted to bring some of them down, but the whites who live among them told them not to go; that no good would come from the Americans; good only came from across the neck of land—from the British. . . . I was willing to go to war against the Sacs on the Mississippi, but I had no guns and only blunt arrows. The British put guns into the hands of all the Sacs. . . . I have little more to tell you. I have already told Captain Manuel to request you to keep those men [British emissaries] away from us. . . . Take care of the Sioux. They listen to too many. They are like a bird that lights upon the branch of a tree and knows not which way to turn. Take care, or they will fly from under your wing."

The Sioux indeed, and all the tribes above, were at the outbreak of the war practically in the power of the British. Trade was almost suspended and such reports as came down indicated the hostility of those tribes. Thus we read in the *Missouri Gazette* of June 5, 1813: "Arrived here a few days ago from the Mandan villages (Upper Missouri), Mr. M. Lisa, acting partner of the Missouri Fur Company. From Mr. Lisa we learn that the Arapahoes, Cheyennes, Aricaras, Gros Ventres, and Crows are, or may be, considered at war with the Americans. The British Northwest Company having a number of trading houses within a short distance of the Missouri, are enabled to embroil our people with the savages, who are constantly urged to cut them off."

This reference to the Northwest Company is suggestive. At this very moment they were straining every nerve to extirpate American influence on the Pacific and it was a part of their general purpose to make the most of the opportunities offered by the war to drive Americans from the entire field along their own territories.

That there were no serious outbreaks among the Missouri Indians must be attributed mainly to the influence of Manuel Lisa. Although a Spaniard by birth, he fully appreciated the advantages of a free government and had accepted it loyally and earnestly. "I have suffered enough in person and property under a different government," he said, in a letter already quoted, "to know how to appreciate the one under which I now live." He took an active part in keeping the Missouri tribes at peace. Recognizing the value of his services Governor Clark appointed him sub-agent of the upper Missouri tribes in the summer of 1814, and this office he held until he voluntarily relinquished it in 1817. We give his own statement of what he accomplished. "The Indians of the Missouri," he said to General Clark, on resigning his commission, "are to those of the upper Missouri as four to one. Their weight would be great if thrown into the scale against us. They did not arm against the Republic; on the contrary they armed against Great Britain and struck the Iowas, the allies of that power. When peace was proclaimed, more than forty chiefs had intelligence with me, and together we were to carry an expedition of several thousand warriors against the tribes of the upper Mississippi, and silence them at once. These things are known to Your Excellency. To the end of the war, therefore, the Indians of the Missouri continued friends of the United States."

Immediately after the news of peace arrived, Lisa took to St. Louis a deputation of forty-three chiefs and head men of the several bands of the Sioux, also the chiefs of the

Omaha and other tribes residing between the Missouri and Mississippi rivers. These chiefs represented nations who had offered their services to the government, and were about to start on a campaign against the Indians of the Mississippi when the war came to an end—another example of belated preparations which, had the war continued longer, would have turned the tide of military success heavily in favor of the Americans.

Some of the Missouri tribes had actually gone to war against the tribes hostile to the United States, and were so engaged at the time of the treaty of peace, and it was one of the first cares of the government, after the ratification of the treaty, to put a stop to their operations. In the spring of 1815 a commission was appointed by President Monroe, consisting of Governor William Clark, Ninian Edwards, and Colonel Auguste Chouteau, for the purpose of informing the Indians who had lately been hostile to the United States of the terms of the treaty with Great Britain, and of entering into peaceful relations with them. The commission met large deputations of Indians from the Mississippi and Missouri rivers at a little place called the Portage des Sioux on the narrow neck of land between the two streams. Among these Indians were those brought down by Manuel Lisa, and with them satisfactory treaties were made without difficulty. But with the Mississippi Indians the case was different. The Sacs of Rock river, Illinois, in particular, were bitterly hostile to the Americans, opposed to the peace, and could not be induced to treat. The labors of the commission were protracted all summer owing to these difficulties, and their report discloses in the clearest light the powerful influence which British traders and emissaries still exercised on our own soil.

So far as events of the war were concerned, very few of a hostile character occurred on the Missouri. There were some destructive raids on the settlements in the vicinity of Boone's Lick, and also a few near St. Louis in the spring of 1815, but with these we have nothing to do. The two principal events which transpired wholly or in part in the valley of the upper Missouri were the sending of messengers to the Indians of the upper Mississippi. So hostile were the Sacs and Foxes that it was found well-nigh impossible to get messengers through their country. It accordingly became necessary to send by way of the Missouri, and thence, from some point above the Omahas, to St. Peter's river in Minnesota. The first of these messengers was sent by Governor Clark in the fall of 1814, with conciliatory messages to the Sioux tribes of the upper Mississippi. He was the noted Sioux, L'Orignal Levé, Standing Moose, commonly called One-Eye, or the One-Eyed Sioux, owing to the absence of one of his eyes, lost by accident in boyhood. He was one of the very few upper Mississippi Sioux who sided with the Americans. He had formed a great friendship for General Pike when that officer passed through his country in 1805, and remained true to that attachment by adhering to the cause of Pike's country. When a party was organized under the leadership of Joseph Renville and Little Crow to make war on the Americans, One-Eye went to St. Louis, offered his services to General Clark, who gave him a commission and engaged him to go on the dangerous errand of carrying messages to the upper tribes. The *Missouri Gazette* of June 13, 1815, referring to this event, says: "Four Sioux Indians arrived here on Thursday last from Prairie du Chien, among whom is the One-Eyed Sioux who came down in the gun-boat last year, and who distinguished himself so gallantly when the boat was attacked by British artillery and a host of Indians. This Sioux and another of his tribe left this place last autumn with Manuel Lisa, Esq., and ascended the Missouri to the River Jacques [James river, South Dakota] from whence he traveled across the country to Prairie du Chien." It appears that on his arrival there, Dickson maltreated him, threatened him with death, imprisoned him, and tried in every way to extract information, but the Indian remained firm and would disclose nothing. He was then liberated and made his way to the Sioux tribes, whence he returned to Prairie du Chien and remained until the British evacuated that place. He came back to St. Louis in June, 1815. He had promised General Clark to visit the various tribes and he kept his word. He always retained his commission as a precious memento, and several persons have left a record of having seen it.[1]

When the commissioners for forming treaties of peace met at Portage des Sioux in the spring of 1815 they were still confronted with the impossibility of communicating with the upper Mississippi tribes. Some attempts were made, although it was a matter of the greatest difficulty to secure volunteers for so perilous an undertaking. Among those who did attempt it was Joseph La Barge, father of the late Captain Joseph La Barge, the noted Missouri river pilot. But it was impossible to get through the Sac and Fox country, and finally the commission had to send by way of the Missouri, as Governor Clark had done the year before. On this important and perilous mission Lieutenant Kennedy, "one of the disbanded officers [of the late war] equally distinguished by his bravery and enterprise," volunteered to go. He succeeded in making the journey, although, owing to the theft of his horses, he did not accomplish as much as he had hoped. He made his way up the Missouri and across to Prairie du Chien, whence he returned late in September or early in October to St. Louis. While among the Missouri Indians he received intelligence that the British had opened an establishment among the Mandan nation. There is no doubt that the Northwest Company hoped to gain a foothold in this quarter, but the treaty of peace defeated their expectations.

With the close of the labors of the peace commission and the rendition of their report, October 18, 1815, the incidents of the War of 1812, so far as they pertain to the upper Missouri country, may be considered at an end.

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[1] For further details in the life of this distinguished Indian see Coues' *Expedition of Zebulon Montgomery Pike*, 1895, p. 87.

CHAPTER II.

THE YELLOWSTONE EXPEDITION OF 1819-1820.

Origin of the expedition — Great expectations — Expedition both military and scientific — The military force — The scientific party — Absurd scheme for moving the troops — The steamboat fiasco — Bad management of the expedition — Sickness at Camp Missouri — The *Western Engineer* — Progress of Major Long up the Missouri — Arrival at the Council Bluffs — Winter Cantonment — Major Long goes to Washington — Failure of the expedition — Organization of Long's expedition of 1820 — Expedition arrives at the Pawnees — Reaches the base of the mountains — Pike's Peak — The Arkansas — Division of the party — Captain Bell's journey down the Arkansas — Major Long's journey down the Canadian — Arrival at Fort Smith — Arrival of party at Cape Girardeau — Itinerary of Long's expedition — Estimate of results — Canadian and Red rivers — Pike's Peak — Publication of report — Major Long's description of the country.

THE expedition whose history forms the subject of this chapter was everywhere popularly known in its day as the Yellowstone Expedition, but is now always spoken of as Long's Expedition. The enterprise was regarded as one of great possibilities for the public good, particularly in the West. The failure of Mr. Astor's project upon the Columbia; the disastrous fortunes of the Missouri Fur Company; the evidences of British influence with Indians residing in United States territory; and the necessity of protection to American trade in the more remote regions; these considerations had prevailed upon Congress to make a formidable showing of national authority along the upper course of the Missouri. Not a few hoped that the arms of the government would be carried to the Columbia, and that American rights upon that river would be restored, as the Treaty of Ghent required, to the status existing before the War of 1812.

The enterprise was a popular one in all parts of the country, and was a favorite measure of President Monroe, and of his Secretary of War, John C. Calhoun. In a letter to the Secretary during the progress of the enterprise, the President said: "The people of the whole Western country take a deep interest in the success of the contemplated establishment at the mouth of the Yellowstone river. They look upon it as a measure better calculated to preserve the peace of the frontier, to secure to us the fur trade and to break up the intercourse between the British traders and the Indians, than any other which has been taken by the government. I take myself very great interest in the success of the expedition, and am willing to take great responsibility to ensure it."

The object of the expedition is officially stated by Secretary Calhoun as follows: "The expedition ordered to the mouth of the Yellowstone, or rather to the Mandan village, is a part of a system of measures which has for its objects the protection of our northwestern frontier and the greater extension of our fur trade."

To the people of the West, and in fact of the whole country, the expedition promised results of which the official purpose above quoted was a very inadequate expression. Quotations might be given at great length from the press of the country and even of Europe, evincing the warmest interest in the enterprise; but it will suffice to notice a few from the Western press to show how great were the expectations of those most directly interested. In an editorial of April 21, 1819, the *Missouri Gazette* of St. Louis said: "The importance of this expedition has attracted the attention of the whole nation, and there is no measure which has been adopted by the present administration that has received such universal commendation. If the agents of the government who have charge of it fulfil the high expectations which have been raised, it will conspicuously add to the admiration with which the administration of James Monroe will hereafter be viewed. . . . In every point of view the Yellowstone Expedition will stand prominent. It will add to the security of the Western country, particularly the frontier settlements; it will keep in check the Indians and prevent their depredations; it will tend to destroy in some measure the influence that our British neighbors possess over the minds of the natives; it will throw additional light upon the geography of that noble river, the Missouri, and also the country on its banks now inhabited by the Indians; it will encourage Western emigration; it will protect and encourage the fur trade which is now productive of such important benefits to the country, and which can be made much more productive; it will conduce to open the communication which nature has ordained ought to exist between the Mississippi and the Pacific ocean. . . . If the expedition should succeed, as we fondly hope and expect, and the views of government should be carried into effect, the time will not be far distant when another nation will inhabit west of the Mississippi, equal at least, if not superior, to those which the ancient remains still found in this country lead us to believe once flourished here: a nation indeed rendered more durable by the enjoyment of that great invention of American freemen—a Federal Republic." The article then went on to state some of the dangers of failure which might arise if unpractical men were put in charge. It gave wise advice in regard to the treatment of the Indians, and throughout displayed a knowledge of the conditions of success which might well have indicated the writer as a fitting individual to form part of the personnel of the expedition.

Niles' Register of October 17, 1818, quoting the *St. Louis Enquirer*, said: "The establishment of this post [at the mouth of the Yellowstone] will be an era in the history of the West. It will go to the source and root of the fatal British influence which has for so many years armed the Indian nations against our Western frontier. It carries the arms and power of the United States to the ground which has hitherto been exclusively occupied by the British Northwest and Hudson Bay Companies, and which has been the true seat of British power over the Indian mind. Now the American arms and American policy will be displayed upon the same theater. The Northwest and Hudson Bay Companies will be shut out from the commerce of the Missouri and Mississippi Indians; the American traders will penetrate in safety the recesses of the Rocky mountains in search of its rich furs; a commerce yielding a million per annum will descend the Missouri, and the Indians, finding their wants supplied by the American traders, their domestic wars restrained by American policy, will learn to respect the American name.

"The name of the Yellowstone river will hereafter be familiar to the American ear."[1]

The high expectations which were built on the possibilities of this expedition are in no way better illustrated than in the exaggerations to which they gave rise. One enthusiast seriously avowed his opinion that the expedition would open a "safe and easy communication to China, which would give such a spur to commercial enterprise that ten years shall not pass away before we shall have the rich productions of that country transported from Canton to the Columbia, up that river to the mountains, over the mountains and down the Missouri and Mississippi, all the way (mountains and all) by the potent power of steam. These are not idle dreams, rely upon it; to me it seems much less difficult than it was universally considered when I first came here to navigate the Missouri with sailboats."[2] The writer of this letter was indeed a trifle "previous" in his forecast, but one can discern in his heated imagination a dim conception of the railroad yet to be. It was not to be for many years, but the time *has* come when the "potent power of steam" transports the goods of China over "mountains and all" to every mart where the needs of the people require them.

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[1] Little did the writer imagine the causes which would yet make the name *Yellowstone* familiar throughout the world.

[2] Letter from Fort Osage to Editor *Niles Register*, May 17, 1819. Published in issue of July 3, 1819.

We can hardly realize now what visions of future greatness then filled the minds of our people. Steam had fairly entered upon its conquest of the navigable waters of the globe, and scarcely a day passed but that some new feat astonished the world and brushed aside another of the "impossibilities" of conservatism. All ranks of society felt the thrill of the new era, and even men of sober experience were swept along in the current. The following views, expressed by a man of long and distinguished public service, reflect the general enthusiasm of the time. Speaking of the Yellowstone Expedition he said: "See those vessels, with the agency of steam, advancing against the powerful currents of the Mississippi and the Missouri! Their course is marked by volumes of smoke and fire, which the civilized man observes with admiration, and the savage with astonishment. Botanists, mineralogists, chemists, artisans, cultivators, scholars, soldiers; the love of peace, the capacity for war; philosophical apparatus and military supplies; telescopes and cannon; garden seeds and gunpowder; the arts of civil life and the force to defend them—all are seen aboard. The banner of freedom which waves over the whole proclaims the character and protective power of the United States."

We have given somewhat at length, and in their own language, the views of the people at the time upon this important expedition, because a full understanding of their high expectations is necessary in order to appreciate their deep disappointment at their non-fulfillment. Unfortunately the very magnitude of the enterprise and its unbounded possibilities led to an elaboration of the means for carrying it into effect which, by its cumbersomeness, proved fatal to the undertaking.

The expedition was to be both military and scientific in character. The movement of troops was planned on a scale wholly beyond the requirements of the occasion, and it was at one time contemplated to send upward of a thousand men. Congress had been led to believe that the movement would actually result in a saving to the military establishment of upwards of forty thousand dollars a year, owing mainly to the diminished cost of subsistence in a country where game was so abundant and grazing free. Troops were moved from Plattsburg, Philadelphia, Detroit, and Bellefontaine near St. Louis. The military expedition was under command of Colonel Henry Atkinson, and so far as he was unhampered in his operations he seems to have conducted it with the practical good sense for which that officer was distinguished. He adopted a device of his own for propelling keelboats, consisting of paddle wheels similar to those of a steamboat, but operated by the soldiers who were on board. This arrangement worked well enough to justify its adoption in an expedition conducted by General Atkinson to the mouth of the Yellowstone in 1825. The movement of the troops began in the fall of 1818 and a considerable detachment under Captain Martin passed the winter near the mouth of the Kansas river at a cantonment christened Camp Martin. The general advance took place in the following spring.

The scientific part of the expedition was under the direction of Major Stephen H. Long, of the Corps of Engineers, U. S. A., an officer of high professional reputation. He was assisted by Major Biddle, who kept the journal; Dr. Baldwin, botanist; Dr. Say, zoologist; Dr. Jessup, geologist; Mr. Peale, assistant naturalist; Mr. Seymour, painter and sketcher, and Lieutenant Graham and Cadet Swift, topographical assistants. The instructions of the Secretary of War to Major Long stated that "the object of the expedition is to acquire as thorough and accurate knowledge, as may be practicable, of a portion of the country which is daily becoming more interesting, but which is yet imperfectly known. You will ascertain the latitude and longitude of remarkable points, with all possible precision. You will, if possible, ascertain some point in the 49th parallel of latitude which separates our possessions from those of Great Britain.

A knowledge of the extent of our limits will tend to prevent collision between our traders and theirs.

"You will enter in your journal everything interesting in relation to soil, face of country, water courses, and productions, whether animal, vegetable, or mineral.

"You will conciliate the Indians by kindness and presents, and will ascertain as far as practicable the number and character of the various tribes, with the extent of country claimed by each."

The instructions of President Jefferson to Captains Lewis and Clark were also cited for guidance.

Such were the fond expectations in regard to this great undertaking and such the elaborate preparations for carrying it into effect. But the magnitude of the conception was in no wise sustained by the skill of its execution. The arrangement for the transportation of the troops disclosed a degree of folly, if nothing worse, which is a disgrace to the military history of the government. The conditions of travel up the Missouri were thoroughly understood at the time, and it was known that by the aid of keelboats the march to the mouth of the Yellowstone could be easily accomplished in a single season. Such was evidently Colonel Atkinson's idea. But the officials in St. Louis having the matter of transportation in charge thought otherwise. So great an enterprise as the Yellowstone Expedition must be conducted with becoming state. No keelboat transportation would answer. The steamboat, that new power on the Western rivers, was alone appropriate to the occasion. Although no steamboat had yet entered the Missouri river, and although a little practical reflection must have shown that some experience would be required to develop and overcome the difficulties of navigating that unruly stream, and that the first efforts must be largely failures, still the government decided to rely mainly upon steamboats. In putting into effect this plan it committed the always disastrous mistake of trusting itself, bound hand and foot, to the tender mercies of a contractor. Of those connected with this expedition, one Colonel James Johnson, contractor, emerges from its confused history with the glory of having accomplished all and more than he expected. Without competition he secured a contract, December 2, 1818, in which not only were the prices exorbitant, but some of them were left to future contingencies to be fixed by arbitration if agreement should fail between the principals. He was also to be allowed advances before services were performed, and that without adequate security to the government. Thus practically guaranteed against loss, the shrewd Colonel Johnson took little care to see that his equipment was of a character which should ensure a prompt fulfillment of the contract. He provided five steamboats, the *Jefferson, Expedition, Johnson, Calhoun, and Exchange.* There is no record that the last two were able to enter the Missouri at all. The *Jefferson* gave out and abandoned the trip thirty miles below Franklin. The *Expedition* and *Johnson* wintered at Cow Island, a little above the mouth of the Kansas, and returned to St. Louis in the following spring. In his entire arrangements Colonel Johnson failed to come up to the contract, and the expedition was thereby hopelessly delayed and its main purpose thwarted. In the disagreements that subsequently arose arbitrators had to be called in, and these sided with the contractor, allowing him over forty thousand dollars for loss occasioned by the very delays for which he alone was responsible. The matter was so scandalous that it led to an investigation by a committee of Congress, who reported against the justice and legality of the award, and recommended the institution of legal proceedings to recover the amount wrongfully paid.[a]

The expedition had not proceeded far before it became evident that its management was hopelessly weak and that it must fall far short of its original purpose.[4] The whole summer was spent on the lower river and it was September 26th before the troops reached Council Bluffs. All thought of going farther was abandoned for the time. A camp was established called Camp Missouri, and here the troops remained for the winter. It proved to be one of the most disastrous winter encampments in the history of the army. The troops suffered terribly from the scurvy. Over three hundred were attacked and of these about one hundred died. The disease prevailed to some extent all winter, and by spring the situation had become "truly deplorable." As soon as it was possible to navigate the river, many of the sick were sent to Fort Osage.

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[a] "The estimated cost for transportation in this favorite project, as reported to Congress at the last session, was $162,994. The sum claimed by Colonel Johnson, and, he [the speaker] was told, actual paid, is $256,818.15." Speech of Mr. Cocke of Tennessee in H. R., Dec. 1, 1820.

The steamboat craze on this expedition was not confined to the military portion, but extended to the scientific adjunct as well. For the use of Major Long's party a special boat was constructed which appears in every way to have been a decided novelty. It was called the *Western Engineer*, and was probably the first stern-wheel steamboat ever built. It was launched in Pittsburg in the winter of 1818-19. The only description of this craft which has come to our notice is the following from the *Missouri Gazette* of May 26, 1819, and a letter written about a month later: "The *Western Engineer* is well armed and carries an elegant flag representing a white man and an Indian shaking hands, the calumet of peace and the sword. The boat is 75 feet long, 13 feet beam and draws 19 inches of water. The steam passes off through the mouth of a large figure-head (a serpent). . . . The wheels are placed in the stern." Omitting the absurd attempts at ornamentation, the boat was as much of a success as could have been expected at that early stage of steamboat experience. It was far better adapted to the navigation of the Missouri than were any of Colonel Johnson's boats, and although it did not leave St. Louis until some time after the rest of the expedition had gone, it passed them all before they reached the mouth of the Kansas, and was the only boat that went through to Council Bluffs.

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[4] "Our great Yellowstone Expedition, about which you have seen so much in the papers, has not yet got above this place, except a detachment of 260 men which passed here last fall, and are now about 80 miles above waiting for the rest. Five or six hundred are expected here every day. When they arrive this fort will be broke up and I shall be left here pretty much alone. The expedition is very badly managed, and will, I fear, fall very far short of the public expectations. The steamboats expected to accompany it are not found to answer very well, and will very probably be abandoned. There is no doubt that the Missouri can be easily navigated by steamboats, but they must be of peculiar construction, and have greater power than those used elsewhere." Letter from G. C. Sibley, July 10, 1819. Fort Osage.

How this unusual craft impressed the popular eye may be inferred from the following extract from a letter dated St. Louis June 19, 1819, ten days after its arrival at that city: "The bow of this vessel exhibits the form of a huge serpent, black and scaly, rising out of the water from under the boat, his head as high as the deck, darted forward, his mouth open, vomiting smoke, and apparently carrying the boat on his back. From under the boat at its stern issues a stream of foaming water, dashing violently along. All the machinery is hid. Three small brass field pieces mounted on wheel carriages stand on the deck. The boat is ascending the rapid stream at the rate of three miles an hour. Neither wind nor human hands are seen to help her, and, to the eye of ignorance, the illusion is complete, that a monster of the deep carries her on his back, smoking with fatigue, and lashing the waves with violent exertion. Her equipments are at once calculated to attract and to awe the savages. Objects pleasing and terrifying are at once placed before him — artillery, the flag of the Republic, portraits of the white man and the Indian shaking hands, the calumet of peace, a sword, then the apparent monster with a painted vessel on his back, the sides gaping with portholes and bristling with guns. Taken altogether, and without intelligence of her composition and design, it would require a daring savage to approach and accost her with Hamlet's speech: 'Be thou a spirit of health or goblin damned, etc.' "

The *Western Engineer* left St. Louis on the 9th of June, 1819, and proceeded by very leisurely stages up the Missouri.[5] The little boat seems to have done very well and to have experienced but few breakages of machinery. There were no incidents of special importance en route. At St. Charles four of the party left the boat for the purpose of exploring the country along shore, but the experience was too rough for them and they were fain to seek the comforts of the boat before a week had passed. At Franklin a stop of a week was made. The people of this frontier town fairly outdid themselves in their extravagant celebrations, on the occasion of the visits of Colonel Atkinson and Major Long. Banquets were had and toasts proposed on a scale that would have done honor to the Capital or metropolis of the country. The record of these elaborate ceremonials may still be read in the files of the newspaper published in Franklin at the time.

Major Long was unfortunate in losing one of his party at Franklin. Dr. Baldwin who was in very ill health was left here and died on the 31st of August following. On the 19th of July four of the party left Franklin to go by land to Fort Osage and the boat left the next day. Fort Osage was reached on the 1st of August. On the 6th most of the party set out from this place by land with the intention of visiting the Kansas and Pawnee Indians and rejoining the expedition near Council Bluffs. The boat left Fort Osage on the 10th, and on the 18th arrived at Isle à la Vache, a few miles above the present site of Leavenworth, where Captain Martin had wintered with three companies of troops, expecting to proceed up the river early in the spring.

A delay of a week was made at Camp Martin for the purpose of treating with the Kansas Indians. The *Western Engineer* resumed her trip on the 25th of August, being accompanied by fifteen soldiers under a Lieutenant Field in the keelboat *General Smith*. Four days after their departure the land party, who were to have gone on to Council Bluffs, arrived at Isle à la Vache for the purpose of again availing themselves of the comforts of the boat. They had been pretty roughly handled by a small party of Pawnees and were satisfied with their taste of frontier experience. Two of them, Messrs. Say and Jessup, were quite ill. Finding the boat gone, the party, except the two sick men, set out by forced marches, and overhauled her on the 1st of September. No other incident of moment occurred until the 17th of September when the boat arrived at Fort Lisa, where it was received by the inmates of the fort with a salute of ordnance and a hospitable welcome. Although yet scarcely halfway to the mouth of the Yellowstone, the great objective point of the expedition, it was decided to go into winter quarters here. Major Long remained only two weeks when he set out for Washington.

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[5] The following is an extract from the log of the *Western Engineer*: "Average running time five hours per day. Average leisure time for examining the country ten hours per day."

The site of the camp for the scientific party was located "half a mile above Fort Lisa, five miles below Council Bluffs, and three miles above the mouth of the Boyer river." The place was christened the *Engineer Cantonment*.

The winter passed away pleasantly enough with the scientific party. They improved their time in securing information concerning the neighboring tribes and particularly the Omahas. They made a few short excursions into the surrounding country, obtained the latitude and longitude of their cantonment, and made some investigation into the geology and natural history of the Missouri valley.

The records of the expedition show that there were continuous and friendly relations subsisting between the military and the members of the Missouri Fur Company. Hospitalities were given and received. Manuel Lisa invited the officers to dinner at his house and the officers reciprocated in kind, and thus began that hospitable intercourse between the citizens of this locality and the officers of the army which has continued until the present day. There were two ladies present, one of them the wife of Lisa and daughter of Stephen Hempstead of St. Louis. The name of the other is not known, but these two women are presumed to be the first who had ascended the Missouri as far as to the present site of Omaha.

It must be apparent from the account just given of the operations of 1819 that the Yellowstone Expedition thus far had been an unqualified failure if not a huge fiasco. The whole enterprise had been smothered in elaboration of method. Although the troops could with ease have marched three times as far as the boats carried them, it was considered necessary to transport them in a manner becoming the dignity of so vast an enterprise. As a result it took an entire season to reach a point which ought to have been reached in two months at most, and the troops passed a frightful winter in a deadly situation when they might have been encamped in the salubrious country at the mouth of the Yellowstone.

The same spirit of absurd extravagance pervaded the scientific branch of the enterprise. If Major Long had been content with a sensible field equipment transported on pack mules, or on a keelboat while along the Missouri, he could have kept his party in the field for five years, and have explored the entire region east of the mountains, for less money than his actual operations cost in the year 1819 alone.

The insignificant results of the first season's work and the scandal growing out of the transportation contract, disgusted Congress with the whole enterprise and that body declined to appropriate any further funds for it. The preface of Dr. James' report of the expedition says that the "state of the national finances during the year 1820 having called for retrenchments in all expenditures of a public nature — the means necessary for the further prosecution of the objects of the expedition were accordingly withheld." It is very well to have a plausible explanation for a great and mortifying failure, but the historian will not let the managers of this enterprise off so easily.

The Yellowstone Expedition was thus cut off before it was half completed, and as a half-hearted apology to the public for its failure, a small side show was organized for the season of 1820 in the form of an expedition to the Rocky mountains. It was placed under charge of Major Long, who returned to the Engineer Cantonment on the 28th of May of that year. The extent to which the great enterprise of the previous year had forfeited public confidence may be inferred from the niggardly assistance which the government lent to the present expedition. The party of Major Long consisted, beside himself, of Captain John R. Bell, Lieutenant W. H. Swift, Thomas Say, Edwin James, T. R. Peale, Samuel Seymour, H. Dougherty, D. Adams three engagés, one corporal and six private soldiers. Of the horses and mules required for the party the government furnished only six, while the members of the party furnished the remaining sixteen. The stock of merchandise wherewith to treat with the Indians was ridiculously small, and the whole equipment was justly styled by Dr. James a " very inadequate outfit."

The immediate object in view on this expedition was to go " to the source of the River Platte and thence by way of the Arkansas and Red rivers to the Mississippi." The expedition left winter quarters on the Missouri June 6, and arrived, with no occurrence worth mentioning, at the Pawnee villages on the Loup fork of the Platte, June 11. To what degree the size and equipment of this expedition were calculated to command the respect of the Indians may be seen in the fact that the chiefs of the Grand Pawnees not only did not welcome the visitors to their camp, but, when invited to appear before the party, declined on the ground that they were otherwise engaged. Nothing was accomplished here beyond an abortive attempt to introduce the process of vaccination among the tribe.

The party left the Loup villages June 13th and the following day reached the Platte about at the present site of Grand Island, Nebraska. Their progress up this river was devoid of incident. They ascended the north bank to the forks of the Platte, both of which they crossed just above the junction, and then ascended the south bank of the South Fork. On the 30th of June they saw the mountains, and the peak which first attracted their attention now bears the name of Major Long. When they first saw it they thought it to be Pike's Peak. On the 5th of July they were encamped within or near the present limits of the city of Denver, and the next day they halted about noon at the point where the South Platte emerges from the mountains. Here the party encamped for the purpose of following the stream into the mountains. The 7th of July was spent in this work, but the small detachment who undertook it got into the foothills only five or six miles, far enough, however, so that some of them saw the junction of the two forks of the South Platte. Finding mountain climbing a pretty exhausting business they returned to camp. Thus terminated that part of the official instructions directing an exploration of the Platte to its source, and the famous Bayou Salade, or South Park, from which the river flows, remained unknown, except to the hunter, for more than twenty years thereafter.

On the 9th of July the party resumed its journey and on the 12th encamped on Fountain creek about twenty-five miles from the summit of Pike's Peak. Here some definite results were accomplished in the ascent of Pike's Peak and the measurement of its altitude. Dr. James with two men made the ascent, arriving at the summit at 4 P. M. on the 14th, and were presumably the first white men to perform that now popular feat. They remained only an hour, made part of the descent that night, and reached camp after dark on the 15th. Lieutenant Swift, in the meanwhile, had measured the height of the peak by a system of horizontal and vertical triangles, and had found its altitude above the plain where the measurement was made to be 8,507 feet. Major Long erroneously estimated the elevation of the plain at only 3,000 feet above sea level. His estimate was arrived at from assumed slopes of the Mississippi, Missouri and Platte rivers, and was naturally liable to great error. The actual elevation of the plain, where the measurement of the altitude of the peak was made, is probably about 5,700 feet, which would give 14,200 feet as the altitude of the peak, as against Long's recorded estimate of 11,507 feet. The trigonometric work seems therefore to have been very accurate.

The party resumed its march on the 16th and arrived that day at the Arkansas near the mouth of Turkey creek. Here another excursion was made to the mountains, very much like that on the Platte. Captain Bell and Dr. James ascended the river one day's march to the cañon of the Arkansas and returned next day to camp. Although it was yet only the middle of July, no further attempt was made to explore the source of either of these rivers, and on the morning of the 12th the party took up its march for the settlements. It arrived in the vicinity of the present town of La Junta, Colorado, on the 21st and spent the next two days in arranging a division of the party and plans for the homeward journey. It was decided that Captain Bell, Lieutenant Swift, three Frenchmen and five soldiers, with most of the horses and baggage, should descend the Arkansas, while Major Long, Dr. James, Mr. Peale, and seven men should proceed to the sources of the Red river and follow that stream to the settlements. A rendezvous was appointed at Fort Smith on the Arkansas. Both parties took up their respective journeys on the 24th of July, 1820.

There is almost nothing in these two journeys that need detain us. Captain Bell's party encountered several small bands of Indians, but had no trouble of moment with any of them. On the 7th of August, two days before arriving at the Great Bend of the Arkansas, two French interpreters who had been hired at the Pawnee villages, terminated their engagements and set out alone to return. These men had given very satisfactory service. On the night of August 30th Captain Bell's party suffered a genuine catastrophe in the loss of much of their camp property, including nearly all the notes and records of the expedition. They were stolen by three men who deserted that night. Captain Bell arrived at Fort Smith on the 9th of September after a march in which the greatest cause of suffering was the excessive heat.

Major Long's party took a course slightly east of south until they reached the valley of Purgatory creek, probably a little below Bent's Cañon. They ascended a fork of this stream which joined the main stream from the east a little above the cañon and made their way to the high land at the head of the stream. Continuing south across several of the sources of the Cimarron, they at length came to a valley which, from its general direction and appearance, they believed to be tributary to Red river, and they resolved to follow it. This was July 30th. Their course for the next four days was southeast down the valley of this stream, until they came to its junction with the main Canadian, which they supposed to be the Red river.

The route from the time the party left the South Platte until they arrived at the Canadian is extremely difficult to follow except along the Arkansas. It would be scarcely possible to find in any narrative of Western history so careless an itinerary, and in a scientific report like that of Dr. James it is quite inexcusable. Those who care to follow the route may do so, by aid of the foot note below, where it has been worked out as fully as the deficient record will permit.

From the camp of August 4th on the Canadian the party descended that stream without any remarkable experience except considerable suffering from heat and lack of food. On the 10th of September they arrived at the Arkansas and found for the first time that they had been following the Canadian Fork of that stream and had not been on the Red river at all. On the 13th of September the party arrived at Fort Smith.

September 21st the re-united party left Fort Smith for Cape Girardeau. A portion of their number visited the noted hot springs of the Washita on the way, and all finally assembled at Cape Girardeau on the 12th of October. Major Long set out at once for St. Louis on the *Western Engineer,* which had arrived a few days before.[6]

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[6] ITINERARY OF MAJOR LONG'S ROUTE BETWEEN JULY 9TH ON THE SOUTH PLATTE AND AUGUST 4TH ON THE CANADIAN.

July 7th and 8th the party were encamped in the valley of the South Platte near where Wheatland, Colorado, now stands.

July 9.—The party set out on their journey, first ascending to its source a small tributary of the Platte, and then crossing the dividing ridge into the valley of Defile [Plum?] creek. This stream they "ascended to the place where its principal branch descends from the mountains," and there encamped. "In the evening a favorable opportunity, the first for several days, presented, and observations for latitude were taken." The table of latitudes and longitudes in the Appendix to Dr. James' book gives the 8th as the day when the observations were taken and the place as the "Camp at the base of the Rocky Mountains." The latitude was computed as 39 degrees 23 minutes 40 seconds, which corresponds more nearly with the probable location of the first camp after leaving the Platte. These considerations indicate that the record may have slipped a day at this point.

July 10.—This day's journey is wholly indefinite. The most that can be made of the description is that the main party ascended Plum or Defile creek for a distance, and then crossed a sandstone ridge about 1,000 feet high to another stream, the valley of which was about a mile wide. From the top of the ridge the bearing of Pike's Peak was S. 50 degrees W.

July 11.—The record of this day is equally unsatisfactory, but the course was probably southeast in the direction of the valley of Squirrel creek. The party, with amazing innocence of their whereabouts, kept on, and "towards evening our guide discovered that we had already passed considerably beyond the base of the Peak, near which it had been our intention to halt." Having performed the remarkable feat of passing the base of Pike's Peak without knowing it, the party "thought it advisable to encamp for the night." Where their camp was is largely a matter of conjecture, but from the course on the following day, and the place where the party then went into camp, we think that it was probably about 20 miles east-southeast of the present site of Colorado Springs.

July 12.—The party retraced their route of the 11th for a distance and then crossed a ridge and descended into the valley of the Fontaine qui Bouit [now Fountain] creek, at a point about 25 miles from the Peak. They arrived here not later than noon. This camp seems to have been at least 15 miles, and perhaps more, from Manitou Springs, In reviewing this expedition and comparing its actual results with what it proposed and what the public expected, the impression left is one of disappointment. In scarcely any respect did it accomplish its purpose. In the movement up the Missouri the point reached was but little more than one-third of the distance to the mouth of the Yellowstone, the intended destination. The whole purpose of carrying the power of the United States to these remote regions and of rendering American trade secure there, fell to the ground.

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and was therefore probably a few miles above the present site of Fountain, Colorado.

July 13.—In the morning Dr. James, Lieut. Swift, and five men set out before sunrise up the valley of Fountain creek. Lieutenant Swift was to find a suitable base from which to measure the altitude of the Peak, and Dr. James with two men was to ascend the Peak.

July 14-15.—These days were consumed in ascent of Pike's Peak and in measuring its altitude. Dr. James reached the summit of the Peak about 4 P. M. of the 14th; remained there one hour; pursued his way back until dark; reached Manitou Springs about noon of the 15th; and the main camp a little after dark on the same day. Lieutenant Swift finished his measurements on the 14th. The altitude of the Peak was found to be 8,507 feet above the plain where the measurements were made.

July 16.—The party set out for the Arkansas. They move "in a southwestern direction" for 28 miles, which they accomplish in ten hours without dismounting. The soil along the line of march was of "incurable barrenness," and the scenery "dreary and disgusting." The first camp on the Arkansas is not described at all, but from the course and distance of the day's march and those of the following days we think the position was about 12 to 15 miles above the present site of Pueblo. The party searched for Pike's old redoubt, but of course did not find it where they were. When they descended the Arkansas it was along the north shore and they did not pass by the position at all.

July 17-18.—Captain Bell and Dr. James made an ascent of the Arkansas to the cañon just above the present site of Canon City. They called the distance 30 miles. They returned on the following day. Latitude of camp 38 degrees 18 minutes 19 seconds. Longitude 105 degrees 39 minutes 45 seconds.

July 19.—The party started down the Arkansas along the left bank. They must have crossed Fountain creek about noon, but they made no mention of it. They passed the mouth of the St. Charles from

The cherished idea that the expedition might open the way to a resumption of the lost business on the Columbia received not the slightest encouragement.

The net result of the military expedition was to establish a post near the present site of Omaha. The position was occupied but a few years when the garrison was withdrawn to the new Fort Leavenworth near the mouth of the Kansas river. Except as to those Indians who visited Fort Lisa or who lived in that vicinity, no intercourse of importance

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the south in the afternoon. Traveled 25 miles, latitude of camp 38 degrees 14 minutes 18 seconds.

July 20.—The party set out at 5 A. M. and "soon afterwards" passed the mouth of the Huerfano from the south. Made 26 miles.

July 21.—Set out at 5 A. M. Having traveled about 6 miles they met an Indian and his squaw who conducted them down to the ford of the Arkansas, where they arrived about 10 A. M.

July 22-23.—These days were spent in preparation for the homeward march. The party was divided. Captain Bell, Lieutenant Swift, three Frenchmen and five soldiers, with most of the horses and baggage, were to descend the Arkansas. Major Long, Dr. James, Mr. Peale and seven men were to descend the Red river.

July 24.—Major Long's party crossed the Arkansas and set off "a little to the east of south nearly at right angles to the Arkansas." Distance 27 miles. The valley of "a considerable stream" [Las Animas or Purgatory] is visible "eight or ten miles" to the southeast.

July 25.—Major Long's party strike the Purgatory a little below Bent's Cañon, although they thought they were only on a tributary. A little after noon they began ascending a small tributary from the east. This is presumably Chaquaqua creek. The party progressed with great difficulty, making only 15 miles.

July 26.—Major Long's party continue up stream, the real distance being estimated at 15 miles, eliminating windings. Halted at 4 P. M. at head of stream.

July 27.—Major Long's party proceed under great difficulties and at length emerge from the valley of the stream which they had been ascending. After reaching the open plain they make some observations. "James' [Pike's] Peak bore N. 71 degrees W.; and the West Spanish Peak S. 87 degrees W.; magnetic variation 13½ degrees east." Halted at 5 P. M., "having traveled about 10 miles nearly due south from the point where we had left the valley of the creek." Total distance for the day could not have been over 15 miles.

July 28.—Major Long's route was "south" and "a little east of was had with any of the tribes and the influence of the expedition upon the Indian question was very small. It should be said, however, that the position near Council Bluffs became the base of operations against the Aricaras in 1823 and of the expedition to the Yellowstone under Atkinson and O'Fallon in 1825.

The expedition of 1820, which was the insignificant finale of the great enterprise, was scarcely more satisfactory than the other operations had been. The party was wretchedly equipped, and as a consequence kept almost continuously

south." The party cross several extensive valleys, the upper courses of the Cimarron, and finally descend into a valley, where they find running water, and encamp there. No distance is given. Probably about 20 miles.

July 29.—Major Long's party leave the valley of the creek where they were, and keep on to the south and possibly a little east of south. They encounter a severe storm from the northeast, and the horses refuse to move except with the wind, "so that rather than suffer ourselves to be carried from our course," they await the subsidence of the storm. No distance stated—say 20 miles.

July 30.—Major Long's party cross a wide plain and descend into the valley of a creek about noon. This they resolve to follow as one of the probable sources of Red river, and therefore decide to abandon their further "journey to the southwest." No distance given—say 20 miles. This stream has received the name of Major Long's creek.

July 31.—Major Long's party continue down the valley in which they encamped the night before. No distance given—say 20 miles. Camp at the mouth of a tributary from the east, probably Leon creek.

August 1.—Major Long's party remain in camp all day.

August 2.—Major Long's party continue down the valley, S. 80 degrees E. Distance about 25 miles.

August 3.—Major Long's party continue down the valley. No distance stated—say 20 miles.

August 4.—Major Long's party continue down the valley, making 16 miles before noon. "General direction . . . still toward the southeast." The stream was believed to be "one of the most considerable of the upper tributaries of the Red river." Confirming this opinion was the presence of a large Indian trail, of some twenty paths, which here entered the valley from the west and passed down the left bank. The distance traveled this day may have been 28 miles. The point where the great trail came in was undoubtedly at the junction of Long creek with the main Canadian and the trail led directly from the Mexican settlements.

on the move in order to avoid starvation until they could get back to the settlements, and they spent at the most but five or six days in exploration of the mountains. The only permanent addition which they made to geographical knowledge was in discovering the great western extent of the Canadian river. This stream, which takes its rise near the mountains east of Santa Fe and flows east, had heretofore been supposed to be the head of Red river. Major Long's expedition showed this not to be the case. He did not, however, descend the main stream in the vicinity of the mountains, but a branch farther east, that formed a junction with the main stream more than a hundred miles from its source; but he saw enough to show that all of the watershed in that section was tributary to the Canadian.

The ascent of Pike's Peak by Dr. James and his companion is supposed to have been the first performance of that feat; and Lieutenant Swift's very excellent measurement of its altitude above the plain where his observations were made is likewise the first attempt in that line. His determination has been but slightly modified by later more accurate measurements. Major Long named the peak James Peak, but posterity has decreed that the name of its discoverer shall stand.

Captain Bell's expedition down the Arkansas, so far as it has been given us, is almost of no geographical consequence. So important a tributary as the Cimarron he missed entirely, and identified the small stream Squaw creek, as that river. He made other similar errors, although traveling in a country which even then was no longer unknown.

Major Long's description of the country, which appears as an appendix to Dr. James' work, is on the whole an accurate one. His astronomical determinations of latitude were correct within an error of five or six miles; his longitudes were too great by from thirty to fifty miles.

By some consideration which had weight in the earlier history of our government the results of this expedition were not published as an official report under the authorship of its leader. Major Long did not write the narrative of his own travels. The work was published under a private copyright by Dr. Edwin James, with an elaborate dedicatory to the Secretary of War which reminds one of the obsequious grovelings to royalty so characteristic of early English writers. The report is interesting and valuable. Its accounts of the Indian tribes and of the native fauna are among the best which we possess. Many incidents of historic importance have also been preserved.

To the public, however, the work was a disappointment. They had looked to it for information relating to the great questions of Western progress then agitating men's minds. It was not a geological survey report that they wanted, but a comprehensive view of the country from a practical standpoint. Long disquisitions upon the evidence found in the mounds about St. Louis, tending to show that our Indian races were of Asiatic origin, might be very interesting to the cause of science, but they did not satisfy the public who were seeking the wealth of the Rocky mountains and a route to the distant Pacific. The report, in short, was not fitted to its purpose; it belonged to the scientific explorations of later times.

Nothing is clearer than that the managers of this enterprise utterly failed to grasp the spirit of its conception; and, as if this were not bad enough, Major Long added in his report the strongest possible negation to the hope that good could ever flow from such a country. Read the summary of his views upon that region which has honored his name by fixing it upon those magnificent mountains, and has given the world an accession of wealth such as the followers of Cortez never dreamed of: "In regard to this extensive section of country, we do not hesitate in giving the opinion, that it is almost wholly unfit for cultivation, and of course uninhabitable by a people depending upon agriculture for their subsistence. Although tracts of fertile land, considerably extensive, are occasionally to be met with, yet the scarcity of wood and water, almost uniformly prevalent, will prove an insuperable obstacle in the way of settling the country. This objection rests not only against the immediate section under consideration, but applies with equal propriety to a much larger portion of the country. Agreeably to the best intelligence that can be had, concerning the country northward and southward of the section, and especially to the references deducible from the account given by Lewis and Clark, of the country situated between the Missouri and the Rocky mountains, above the river Platte, the vast region commencing near the sources of the Sabine, Trinity, Brazos, and Colorado, and extending northwardly to the forty-ninth degree of north latitude, by which the United States territory is limited in that direction, is throughout, of a similar character. The whole of this region seems peculiarly adapted as a range for buffaloes, wild goats, and other wild game, incalculable multitudes of which find ample pasturage and subsistence upon it.

"This region, however, viewed as a frontier, may prove of infinite importance to the United States, inasmuch as it is calculated to serve as a barrier to prevent too great an extension of our population westward, and secure us against the machinations or incursions of an enemy that might otherwise be disposed to annoy us in that quarter."

Here is an essay in prophecy that would have done credit to that great man, Daniel Webster, who could with difficulty see anything of national greatness beyond the Mississippi. Did Major Long perceive no inconsistency in declaring with one breath that the country he had traversed was "uninhabitable by a people depending upon agriculture for their subsistence" and in the next that "incalculable multitudes" of grazing animals could "find ample pasturage and subsistence upon it"? And he did not confine his views to the region that fell under his immediate observation, but applied them to the entire sweep of country from the Spanish to the British possessions and westward from the meridian of Council Bluffs to and beyond the mountains — a country where now are several large cities, towns and villages without number, and a population of more than six million people. In that section which he traversed at the base of the Rocky mountains where he said "the scarcity of wood and water" would "prove an insuperable obstacle in the way of settling the country" is now to be found some of the best agricultural land in the United States from which products are annually exported to distant parts of the country.

It is hard for us to comprehend today how an officer of such signal ability and long experience should have seen in this country nothing better than a fortunate frontier "calculated to serve as a barrier to prevent too great an extension of our population westward, and to secure us against the machinations or incursions of an enemy that might otherwise be disposed to annoy us in that quarter." It is true that at that time there had been cause enough to apprehend annoyance from our traditional enemy in the southwest, and Major Long is certainly not to be criticised for not foreseeing the expulsion of that enemy from the greater part of the territory west of our own; but his fear of undue expansion of our population was no more justifiable than have been, and are still, the phantom fears of certain minds at every effort of their country to put off the vestments of infancy for the more appropriate clothing of maturer years.

And so it resulted that Major Long's report proved a veritable stumbling-block in the way of a just appreciation of the importance of our Western interests. Whenever any measure was urged in Congress looking to the more immediate occupation of that country, this report was a sufficient answer. Why waste the public treasure in establishing possession of a region which could never become the abode of civilized man? Here was an official government report, prepared by an able officer sent for the express purpose of spying out the land. Surely the statements of irresponsible adventurers and uninformed enthusiasts were not to stand against it? It thus became one of the most powerful weapons which men of the Webster type made use of whenever they felt called upon to resist "too great an extension of our population westward."

Thus the people of the West, who had hoped from this expedition to enlist government aid in the reclamation of a remote region, found themselves in a worse plight than before. Instead of the government becoming enthused with their own faith, its doubts were strengthened. But the people themselves did not lose faith. They continued to penetrate farther and ever farther — even to the shores of the Pacific — through the unknown places of that illimitable country. Government was finally compelled to follow where it had refused to lead, and within another generation it was glad enough to be the fortunate possessor of those very regions which were at this time not considered worth having.

CHAPTER III.

THE ARICARA CAMPAIGN OF 1823.

Col. Leavenworth organizes an expedition against the Aricaras — Joshua Pilcher made sub-Indian agent — Loss of a keelboat — Organization of troops and allies at Fort Recovery — March resumed — Strength of opposing forces — Beginning of the attack — Result of first day's fight — Second day's operations — Disaffection among the Sioux — Charge abandoned — Results of second day's fight — Attempts to treat with the Indians — Pilcher's disapproval — Third day's operations — Treaty of Peace — Pilcher and Vanderburgh refuse to participate — Failure of Aricaras to comply with treaty — Charge contemplated but abandoned — Aricaras abandon their village — Attempts to get them back — Expedition starts down the river — Losses of the campaign — Successful operation until villages are reached — Vacillating conduct before the villages — Effect upon the Aricaras — Colonel Leavenworth's motives — Quarrel between Leavenworth and Pilcher.

THIS important campaign was the first ever conducted by the Army against the Indians west of the Mississippi and it was the precursor of that long series of operations in which so many American soldiers lost their lives and which culminated only a decade since in the conquest of the West. The campaign, therefore, deserves something more than a passing notice.

It will be remembered that General Ashley, after his disaster before the Aricara villages, June 2, 1823, dropped down the river to a safe distance, threw up a defensive work on an island, dispatched J. S. Smith to notify Henry on the Yellowstone, and sent a message to Benjamin O'Fallon, Indian agent near the old Council Bluffs, detailing his misfortune. Colonel Henry Leavenworth, in command of the troops at that point, acted with commendable promptness. The message was shown to him on the 18th of June and he at once decided to march against the Aricaras without waiting to communicate with the Department at St. Louis. The necessary preparations were made as rapidly as possible, and on the 22nd the troops set out, partly by boat and partly on foot, Colonel Leavenworth commanding in person. The force amounted to two hundred and twenty men and comprised six companies of the 6th U. S. Infantry. They carried two six-pounder cannons and several small swivels. The supplies were transported in three keelboats.

Joshua Pilcher, president of the Missouri Fur Company, who had just suffered an even greater disaster than that of Ashley in the destruction of his party under Immel and Jones on the Yellowstone, was eager to lend such assistance as he could in the campaign. He was at old Fort Lisa at the time, and was made special sub-agent for the Sioux tribes by O'Fallon during the operations against the Indians. He equipped two boats, took on a 5½ inch howitzer from Fort Atkinson, and overtook Colonel Leavenworth on the 27th. Pilcher was of much assistance to Leavenworth, who repeatedly acknowledges his indebtedness to him.

The expedition proceeded continuously although slowly on account of the difficulties of river navigation. On the 3rd of July a distressing accident occurred in the wrecking of Lieutenant Wickliffe's boat and the loss of Sergeant Stackpole, a brave and experienced veteran of the War of 1812, with six privates, seventy muskets, and a large quantity of supplies. This misfortune caused greater loss than all the rest of the campaign.

Ashley was on his way down the river from the point where he had left his men when he heard of the approach of the United States troops. He immediately turned about and made haste to his camp, one hundred and twenty miles above, where he made preparations to join Leavenworth with his entire party. Henry, who had arrived from the Yellowstone some time before, augmented Ashley's force to about eighty men. The entire party seem to have then gone down to meet Leavenworth. Pilcher also had hastened on in advance of the troops and had gotten his own party in readiness, numbering about forty men under the immediate command of Henry Vanderburgh. He also succeeded in collecting Indian auxiliaries numbering some four or five hundred Yanktons and Sioux. The point where Pilcher and Ashley were in waiting is called Fort Recovery[1] in Colonel Leavenworth's reports. Fort Brasseaux, mentioned by Ashley, seems to have been in this vicinity.

Colonel Leavenworth arrived at Fort Recovery on the 19th of July at 10 A. M. Several days were now spent in organizing the troops and allies. Two additional officers here joined the command. They were Major Wooley and Brevet-Major Ketchum, who had not reached Fort Atkinson before Leavenworth's departure, but had at once set out to overtake the troops.[2] In the re-organization the companies of regulars were reduced to five in number, and arms distributed accordingly, ten rifles being borrowed from Pilcher and thirty from Ashley to help make up for those lost in the keelboat wreck. Ashley's and Pilcher's auxiliaries were accepted.

"General Ashley," says Leavenworth, in his report, "nominated his officers and their appointments were confirmed in orders. They were as follows: Jedediah Smith for Captain; Hiram Scott, do; Hiram Allen, Lieutenant; George C. [David?] Jackson, do; Charles Cunningham, Ensign; Edward Rose, do; ——— Fleming, Surgeon; T. Fitzpatrick, quartermaster; William Sublette, Sergeant-Major.

"Mr. Pilcher, as acting member of the Missouri Fur Company, for himself and party offered me the services of forty men. These were formed into one company. Mr. Pilcher was assigned to the command of the Indians, with the nominal rank of Major. He nominated his officers and their appointment was confirmed in orders. They were as follows: Henry Vanderburgh, Captain; Angus McDonald as Captain of the Indian Command; [Moses B.] Carson, 1st Lieutenant; [William] Gordon, 2nd do; . .

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[1] "Arrived at a trading establishment called by the Indian traders Fort Recovery and sometimes Cedar Fort." Fort Kiowa was "eight or ten miles above where we lay." Leavenworth.

[2] The roll of officers who accompanied the expedition included the following: Colonel Leavenworth, Major Wooley, Brevet-Major Ketchum, Captains Riley and Armstrong, Lieutenants Bradley, Cruger, Wickliffe, Moore, Noel, and Doctor Gale.

"These appointments were merely nominal, and intended only to confer the same privileges and respect on them as were paid to our own officers of the same grade. No nominal rank was conferred on General Ashley as he was then a Brigadier General in the militia of the State of Missouri, and Lieutenant Governor of the same.

"The forces thus organized, including regular troops, mountaineers, voyageurs and Indians, were styled the 'Missouri Legion,' and numbered altogether about eight hundred fighting men."

As soon as the re-organization was complete the march was resumed and the command arrived before the Aricara villages on the 9th of August, having made the distance from Council Bluffs, 640 miles, in forty-eight days, including the time spent in re-organization at Fort Recovery. On the previous day, August 8th, the command left the boats at a point about twenty-five miles below the villages. The flotilla was placed in charge of Major Wooley and ten men to each boat, with instructions to move it up the river after the troops. The land advance from this point was made in the following order: A scouting party of Sioux under Pilcher's direction went ahead, the better to conceal the character of the attacking force. These were followed by Captain Riley with a company of riflemen, after whom came General Ashley with his two companies of mountaineers followed by the rest of the command, except Pilcher's men, who kept on with their boats. Before the attack began about three hundred and fifty additional Indian recruits joined the command, making a total force before the Aricara villages of about eleven hundred men. Opposed to this force there were between six and eight hundred warriors in the two Aricara villages, and between three and four thousand individuals all told, men, women and children. The attacking force was amply sufficient for the work in hand, notwithstanding that the Aricaras were to some extent sheltered in their dirt villages and had erected some rude palisades. The Aricaras do not seem to have had any expectation of this formidable attack and had made no especial preparations to resist it. Thus far, therefore, the campaign had progressed most favorably and there was no reason to doubt its early and successful termination.

The command had passed the night of the 8th some eight or nine miles below the villages, and early the next morning moved out to the attack. Pilcher was ordered to advance with his Indian auxiliaries and surround the villages so as to prevent escape, and give battle if the Aricaras came out. The Sioux moved to the front with great impetuosity and were met by the Aricaras at the termination of the plain on which the villages stood, and about half a mile below them. Here ensued a sharp struggle in which the valor of the Sioux was met with equal valor on the part of the Aricaras. Thirteen of the latter were left dead on the ground. Whether any of the dead were removed, or what was the number of the wounded, is not known. The Sioux lost two killed and seven wounded, but failed to drive back the enemy.

Alarmed at the prospect of a repulse, and finding that the troops were not yet in supporting distance, Pilcher hastened to the rear for reinforcements. The whole line was then advanced rapidly in the following order: Ashley's two companies were on the right, resting on the river; next were the five companies of the 6th Regiment, and on the left were Major Riley's riflemen, who seem to have been a picked company formed when the number of regular companies was reduced to five. The Sioux being still engaged in front, it was not possible to open fire on the Aricaras until they were passed. When the Aricaras saw the whites approaching they broke and fled to their villages and the troops followed to within three or four hundred yards, where they halted to await the arrival of the boats with the artillery. It would hardly seem that the hour could have been later than noon, although Pilcher says that "the day was already far spent." The artillery did not arrive until sundown, and further attack was delayed until the next day. After the Aricaras left the field the Sioux withdrew to the cornfields of their enemies and bore no further part in the operations.

The attack for the following day, August 10th, was planned to take place simultaneously against both villages. Two companies under Major Riley were sent to the upper village where they secured a good position within one hundred yards of the palisades. Major Vanderburgh, with the Missouri Fur Company contingent, was also stationed at this point, and hither was sent one of the six-pounders under Sergeant Perkins. General Ashley, as on the day before, held the extreme right of the line below the lower village, and on his left was Lieutenant Morris, with the other six-pounder and the howitzer. The rest of the troops were disposed along the front of the lower village, except one company under Major Ketchum, which was ordered at 8 A. M. to reinforce the line at the upper village. The attack was opened by Lieutenant Morris with the artillery. His first shot killed the chief, Grey Eyes, and his second cut down the medicine flag staff. Vanderburgh's artillery was posted at too high an elevation and the shot passed over the village into the river. He was ordered down into the plain and his firing then had more effect. Meanwhile the infantry advanced to within three hundred yards and fired one volley to discharge their guns, which had been loaded for a long time.[3]

It soon became evident that the artillery was not going to accomplish its purpose of driving the Indians from their lodges, and that it would be necessary to storm the works if they were to be taken. Colonel Leavenworth now began to investigate the strength of the position. He was told by those who had been in the villages that the palisades were strong, with a trench on the inside. One man who had wintered at the Aricara villages advised the Colonel that they could be taken only by "sapping and mining"; that the Indians had full confidence in their ability to hold the town, and that every squaw would "count her coup" rather than yield. This was not the kind of resistance that Colonel Leavenworth had expected, but in order to test its real strength, he ordered preparations for an assault upon the "acute angle" at the upper village. Ashley in the meanwhile was ordered to make a diversion at the lower village. He took possession of a ravine within "20 paces" of the village, from which he opened a brisk fire. Pilcher was instructed to notify the Sioux of the approaching attack and to bring them in to co-operate. He cautioned the Colonel not to rely upon them for this work, for they would probably wait until the Aricaras were driven out, when they could be attacked in the open. Nevertheless an attempt was made to secure their aid, but not very successfully, and owing to their lack of co-operation the charge was abandoned. The cannonade was continued until midday.

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[3] Leavenworth's report.

After the charge was declared off, Colonel Leavenworth, with a subordinate officer, went around to view the river side of the towns, where he heard that the Indians were escaping. Learning the falsity of this report he returned, and on his way back saw some Aricaras who had gotten into a ravine and were pouring a "galling fire" upon the troops. Major Ketchum was sent to dislodge them.

Leavenworth then went to the upper village. Pilcher, whom he found here, told him that he could no longer vouch for the assistance of the Sioux unless some decisive action were taken. The impetuous and fickle nature of the Indians was not suited to the tedium of a siege, and they could be held to work only by the excitement of actual combat. Leavenworth replied that he was meditating a general assault, but thought that he would first try a stratagem, and asked Pilcher's opinion. Pilcher thought that stratagem was justifiable toward such a people. Leavenworth then said that "he had thought of sending Simeneau, the Aricara interpreter, to hail the Indians and tell them that they were fools that they did not come out and speak with the whites." If they would do this, it would give an "opportunity to examine the works." Pilcher thought that this strategem "could do no harm, at any rate." The effort failed in due course and Leavenworth then repaired to the lower village, where Lieutenant Morris was still working away with his six-pounder. Finding that there were but thirteen shot left the Colonel ordered the artillery to cease firing. He then sent word to the Sioux that he had decided to withdraw the forces from the upper village and advised them to leave the cornfields in order to "save their stragglers from the tomahawks of the Aricaras."

The forces were then withdrawn from the upper village and the whole command was moved back about half a mile to a camp opposite the boats. By this time it was after 3 P. M. "Orders were given to senior officers of corps to have their men obtain some refreshment as soon as possible, and then to form their corps and march to the enemy's cornfield to obtain some corn for the subsistence of our men, several of whom, and particularly General Ashley's men, had not had any provisions for two days." Colonel Leavenworth then withdrew to his cabin on the boat.

Such were the inglorious proceedings of the 10th of August, for nothing else was attempted during that day. Their effect upon the Sioux had been to discourage them and arouse their contempt for the whites. They had joined the expedition with the expectation of plundering the Aricara villages. They had made the only real fight, so far, and had since been the spectators of the futile efforts of the whites. They now lost all heart in the campaign, and having laden themselves with Aricara corn, withdrew from further co-operation.

Presently Colonel Leavenworth came out of his boat and had interviews with General Ashley and with Pilcher. His plan now was to secure a supply of provisions and renew the attack next day. At this time a Sioux Indian and an Aricara were observed holding a parley and it was learned that the Aricaras were suing for pity on their women and children. They said that the man who had caused all the trouble was dead and the rest of the people wanted peace. Leavenworth sent the Indian back to tell the Aricaras to send out their chiefs at once if they wanted peace. He then returned to his boat and soon ten or twelve Indians were seen approaching. The senior officers advanced to meet them. The Indians appeared much frightened and begged the whites not to fire any more at them for they were "all in tears." Leavenworth told them that they must restore Ashley's property as a condition of peace, promise to behave well in the future and surrender five men as hostages. They promised to restore all the property that they had, but said that the horses had mostly all been killed or stolen. Leavenworth then told them of the great power of the Americans, which they had yet scarcely felt, and assured them that while his people desired to live on terms of friendship with them, they must conduct themselves differently or they would be punished more severely than they had yet been. They all made fair promises. Colonel Leavenworth adds: "Considering my small force, the strange and unaccountable conduct of the Sioux, and even the great probability of their joining the Aricaras against us—and also considering the importance of saving to our country the expense and trouble of a long Indian war, and the importance of securing the Indian trade, I thought it proper to accept the terms."

The pipe of peace was brought forth and passed the rounds until it reached Pilcher, who refused to smoke or even to shake hands, and got up and walked back and forth in great agitation, telling the Indians that they could look out for him on the morrow. He finally consented to smoke, as it was Colonel Leavenworth's wish, but he refused his assent to the rest of the proceedings. His manner produced a bad effect upon the Indians, who had been told by Colin Campbell that Pilcher was the most important man among the whites. After smoking Leavenworth picked out five principal Indians as hostages, and with a present of twelve robes from the Indians, made ready to depart. But at the instigation of Colin Campbell, as Colonel Leavenworth thought, and also at the sight of the dead body of one of their nation who had been killed by the Sioux on the day before, the Indians became frightened and refused to go. Some shots were exchanged, but no harm was done; and thus ended the first attempt at negotiations for peace.

Colonel Leavenworth now learned that the disgusted Sioux had turned enemy to a certain extent and had stolen six government mules and seven of Ashley's horses. Fearing that they had conspired with the Aricaras to destroy the whites, he ordered his command to entrench for the night. There was indeed some ground for this fear. The operations for the day had given the Sioux a lively contempt for the Americans. One of the chiefs, Fire Heart, had been acting a mysterious and equivocal part for a day or two back, and he had now retired to the hills with a large party, where he was most likely waiting to see which side would come out victorious.

The night, however, passed without incident, and on the morning of the 11th the Aricara chief, Little Soldier, came out. He said that his people had been much alarmed at the incident of the night before. Leavenworth tried to explain it away, whereupon Little Soldier said that he would get some of the chiefs to come out, and he wished that some of the white chiefs would visit the village. In particular he wanted to know if Pilcher would make peace, and Leavenworth replied that he would have to. Edward Rose, one of the interpreters, was now sent in and soon returned with the information that the Indians were completely humbled. Doctor Gale and Lieutenant Morris also went in and returned with similar information. They found that the fortifications were much weaker than they had supposed; "that the pickets were very frail, and that they had but slight ditches on the inside." Major Ketchum then went in and confirmed the report of the humbled feelings of the Indians. Their attitude was further evidenced by their offer to give the whites a load of provisions if they would send a boat up.

They were now ordered to send out their chiefs, but they evasively sent out irresponsible men. Finally some of the principal men came out. Leavenworth then called upon Sub-Agent Pilcher to draft a treaty, but Pilcher declined. A similar request to Major Vanderburgh, also a sub-agent, was similarly declined. Leavenworth then drew up the treaty himself. It was signed by eleven Indians (although, according to Pilcher, by no chief of authority) and by six army officers. General Ashley, at whose request the expedition had been undertaken, was the only other person who signed it.

The treaty contained four articles. In the first the Aricaras agreed to restore the property taken from Ashley. By the second they stipulated not to molest the traders in the future. Articles 3rd and 4th were mutual promises that the United States and the Aricaras should henceforth live at peace.

Immediately upon the conclusion of the treaty unrestrained intercourse opened up between the whites and the Indians. In carrying out the first article of the treaty, the Aricaras surrendered three rifles, one horse and sixteen robes. They were told that this would not do. Late in the afternoon Chief Little Soldier, who seems to have been a coward and a traitor to his own people, and evidently very little esteemed by them, although the first one to sign the treaty, came to Leavenworth's boat and said that it was impossible for the Indians to do more than they had done.

The upper village, which had no part in the attack on Ashley, refused to contribute anything. He said that Grey Eyes, the principal agitator, was dead, and that for himself he had always been friendly to the whites, and had sent warning to Ashley at the time of the Aricara attack, the previous June. He begged that he might come over to the side of the whites in case of a renewal of the attack. He gave the interesting advice that the artillery should fire *low,* and he pointed out the best place for attack. Such was the craven individual for whose welfare Colonel Leavenworth showed so much solicitude.

It now became a question of accepting the failure of the Indians to restore Ashley's property or of renewing the attack. The latter alternative was the choice of the army officers and the auxiliaries. Lieutenant Morris had found more shot for the cannon and every one was confident of success if the charge were made. But for some unaccountable reason Colonel Leavenworth could not bring himself to take the decisive step. He has described the conflict of his own thoughts, which clearly shows that, while he was actuated by the purest motives, he lacked the firmness which the occasion demanded. "I felt that my situation was a disagreeable and unpleasant one. It appeared to me that my reputation and the honor and success of the expedition required that I should gratify my troops and make the charge. But I also thought that sound policy and the interest of my country required that I should not.

"For my own part I felt confident that the Indians had been sufficiently humbled, fully to convince them of our ability to punish them for any injury which they might do us, and that they would behave well in the future."

The responsibility of the situation Colonel Leavenworth evaded for the present by postponing the attack until the next day, August 12th. He did this at the request of Little Soldier, in order to permit that shifty savage to escape with his family; and also because it was so nearly night that to attack them would leave the wounded to be cared for after dark. Rose, the interpreter, then went into the villages and got the Indians to send out a few more robes, which they said was the utmost they could do. He assured Colonel Leavenworth that the Indians were preparing to leave and that they would certainly escape that night; but in spite of all these proofs of their insincerity the Colonel sent word to them that he would waive further compliance with Article I, and urged them not to leave. No precautions were taken to prevent escape, and when the command awoke on the morning of the 12th the villages were deserted except by one woman, the aged and decrepit mother of the fallen chief, Grey Eyes. The next two days were spent in a futile effort to find the Aricaras and induce them to return to their villages; and at 10 A. M. on the morning of August 15th, the command embarked for the return journey, leaving the aged mother of Grey Eyes with plenty of provisions in peaceable possession of the villages. Scarcely were the boats under way when the villages were discovered to be on fire and are presumed to have been destroyed.

In the operations before the Aricara villages the whites lost none in killed and but two slightly wounded. The Sioux lost two killed and seven wounded in the attack of the 9th. The loss of the keelboat with its property and crew on the way up the river was the one serious disaster of the expedition — a very serious one indeed—but, so far as is known, wholly accidental. Colonel Leavenworth thought that the Aricara loss amounted to fifty, but Pilcher was positive that it could not exceed thirty, including women and children, and of these thirteen had been killed by the Sioux. The bombardment caused very few casualties, for it is evident from the hint dropped by Little Soldier that the Indians lay on the ground and that most of the shot passed over them. The effect of the shot on the mud huts was inappreciable. These were all the material results of the campaign under Leavenworth's immediate command, to which may be added the looting of the Aricara cornfields by the Sioux and the burning of the villages by unknown hands. The cost of the expedition was only about two thousand dollars, and the time consumed about seventy-five days. The experience of the troops on the long march and the knowledge it gave them of the country were among its most valuable results.

Colonel Leavenworth's prompt and energetic action, when he received the news of Ashley's disaster, was most creditable. It was a serious responsibility to take — that of ordering an expedition over six hundred miles away without previous authority from his superior. But Colonel Leavenworth rightly judged that it was not a time to wait several weeks for communication with St. Louis, and he decided to go at once.

The co-operation of General Ashley and Major Pilcher was hearty and energetic. The latter succeeded in getting a large auxiliary force from the Sioux on the strength of a prospect of plundering the Aricara villages. With both gentlemen Colonel Leavenworth was highly pleased at first, although he had a serious falling out with Pilcher before he got through.

Excepting the loss of the keelboat everything went well until the arrival before the villages. The opening attack by the Sioux was vigorous and determined. But from this point on the conduct of Colonel Leavenworth was so vacillating and ineffectual, and apparently governed by such an undue estimate of the obstacles in his way, and such a dread of incurring any loss, that he disgusted the Indian allies, forfeited their friendship and co-operation, and excited the contempt and amazement of the trappers and mountaineers. There is no reason to suppose that an assault on the towns would not have been successful, and from every point of view it was imperative upon Colonel Leavenworth to attempt it. Why had he come this great distance if it was not to inflict summary punishment upon these people? Instead of doing so he fairly begged them for peace, and after having completed a treaty, which he was compelled to write himself because the duly constituted officers of the government flatly refused to participate in it, he next waived fulfillment of its one essential article.

The whole conduct of the fight, if such it can be called, had only served to detract from the credit of the national arms. How little effort was actually made to reduce the villages is apparent from the lack of casualties. It is, of course, no proof of bad management that an officer brings his men out of action without loss of life — rather quite the reverse, if he has accomplished his purpose. But when a whole day's attack upon a fortified town held by six hundred able-bodied warriors results in only slightly wounding two of the assailants, it is evident that the attack could not have been very efficient. Such a result is scarcely compatible with Colonel Leavenworth's account of the "galling fire" to which his command was, on at least one occasion, subjected.

In regard to the Aricaras, Colonel Leavenworth's impression that they were "completely humbled" was wholly erroneous. Even while the treaty was going on, and immediately afterward, proof of their bad faith was patent to every one. They failed to carry out the principal article of the treaty and virtually repudiated the whole compact by deserting their villages in the very presence of the troops. In "Orders" issued to the regiment August 29th upon the return of the expedition to Fort Atkinson, Colonel Leavenworth said: "The blood of our countrymen has been honorably avenged, the Aricaras humbled, and in such manner as will teach them and other Indian tribes to respect the American name and character." Such was not the opinion of those conversant with the facts. The affair was then considered a complete fiasco and its fame as such persisted in tradition until the details were wholly forgotten. Ten years afterward Maximilian thus referred to it: "The inhabitants of the banks of the Missouri affirm that this enterprise was conducted with very little energy; they retired from the enemy's villages without destroying them or doing much injury to the inhabitants, at which the allied

Indians especially were much dissatisfied. The Aricaras, on the other hand, became extremely arrogant, and henceforth attacked and murdered all white men who were so unfortunate as to fall in their way."

Scarcely had Colonel Leavenworth read his orders to the troops at Fort Atkinson when several trappers were massacred by these Indians near the Mandan villages. In the following winter several were killed by them in the valley of the Platte, and similar outrages were of frequent occurrence for many years thereafter. It is true that General Atkinson in 1825 found them humble and peaceably inclined, but his visit was in company with a formidable military force. The history of the twenty years following this affair, far from justifying the hopeful predictions of Colonel Leavenworth, were rather a literal fulfillment of the despondent prophecy of Major Pilcher in a letter to Benjamin O'Fallon within a week after the troops left the Aricara villages. "It is my sincere and candid opinion," he wrote, "that the expedition against the Aricaras, from which so much service might have been rendered to this dwindling and bleeding commerce, will rather tend to increase, than diminish, the evil; that the situation of affairs in this country is worsted materially; that instead of raising the American character in the estimation of its inhabitants and impressing them with the power and spirit of our government, the contrary effect has been produced; and that the outrages of the Indians will increase in consequence. That a most unfavorable impression has been left upon the minds of our Indian allies is a fact that I am sorry to communicate."

It is difficult to fathom the motives which actuated Colonel Leavenworth in this campaign. It was not lack of courage, for his excellent record was evidence against any such theory. It is probable that he felt alarmed at the responsibility that he had voluntarily assumed. He might reasonably doubt that his superiors would approve of his action in taking so large a command to so great a distance simply to punish an outrage against a party of traders and trappers. The lamentable accident in the wreck of the keelboat doubtless increased his anxiety and made him doubly anxious to achieve the object of the expedition without further loss. Finally he may have distrusted his Indian allies and even the trappers and mountaineers, and have feared that a successful assault of the villages might have ended in a massacre of its inhabitants. He was well aware that such a result would have raised a storm back in the States where the circumstances would be imperfectly understood. It is only from considerations of this character that it is possible to explain his conduct at the Aricara towns, and his deliberate choice of a course which could not fail to tarnish his reputation and bring down the contempt of the Indians upon the American arms.

One of the most regrettable features of the whole affair was the feeling of bitter animosity that was engendered between Colonel Leavenworth and Joshua Pilcher. Both were men of high character and unblemished reputation. Colonel Leavenworth had already won enviable distinction in his country's service, particularly in the battles of Chippewa and Niagara Falls in the War of 1812. He was a true soldier and a good officer and whatever may have been his error of judgment in the present case, there was no suspicion that he acted from any but the most disinterested motives.

Mr. Pilcher was one of the ablest of the traders, and had succeeded Manuel Lisa in the presidency of the Missouri Fur Company. His character was above reproach; he was well informed, and his opinions on matters relating to the Indian trade were more than once sought for by the government. He had apparently joined the expedition purely from a desire to help punish the Aricaras, for as he had now withdrawn all of his establishments above the Sioux, he was not protecting his own interests to the same extent that Ashley was. Leavenworth was highly pleased with him up to the time when he began his negotiations for peace. He says in one of his reports: "Allow me to say that up to this time I had been very well pleased with Mr. Pilcher in every respect, particularly as sub-agent. He had neglected no opportunity to be serviceable to the expedition and had done everything in his power to ensure its success."

Colonel Leavenworth's decision to negotiate peace without a victory excited the indignation of Pilcher, who had just seen his Sioux auxiliaries draw off in disgust at the failure to accomplish anything. He refused to be a party to the treaty and probably did all that he could to cause this part of the proceedings to fail. His conduct naturally aroused the ire of Colonel Leavenworth, who considered him bound to obey orders as long as he was attached to the command. The burning of the villages after the troops had left was at once attributed by Colonel Leavenworth to Pilcher, but it was probably one of Pilcher's men, William Gordon. Pilcher positively denied being party to the act, and disclaimed any knowledge of who the guilty party was, at the same time intimating that in his opinion the act was altogether justifiable.

Colonel Leavenworth added fuel to the flame of discord by issuing an order on the day of departure from the Aricara towns, in which he directly charged the Missouri Fur Company with the destruction of the villages, and declared that "with such men he would have no further intercourse." From this ban of displeasure he excepted Major Henry Vanderburgh and Moses B. Carson. But these gentlemen would not accept the Colonel's indulgence, and wrote to Pilcher on the day following that they felt "extremely mortified at having been selected as the object of his [Leavenworth's] approbation and praise." Pilcher himself was enraged at Leavenworth's order, and permitted his indignation to get the better of his judgment entirely. On the 23rd of August, at Fort Recovery, he addressed a letter to Colonel Leavenworth, which, whatever truth it might contain, was couched in such violent and abusive language as to produce the opposite effect upon the public from what was intended. His provocation was indeed great, and he was not a man given to the mincing of words, but he ought at least to have refrained from personal abuse. He closed his letter with the following passage, in which, it must be acknowledged, there was more truth than the partisans of Colonel Leavenworth would have been willing to admit: "I am well aware," he wrote, "that humanity and philanthropy are mighty shields for you against those who are entirely ignorant of the disposition and character of Indians, but with those who have experienced the fatal and ruinous consequences of their treachery and barbarity these considerations will avail nothing. You came to restore peace and tranquillity to the country, and to leave an impression which would insure its continuance. Your operations have been such as to produce the contrary effect, and to impress the different Indian tribes with the greatest possible contempt for the American character. You came (to use your own language) to 'open and make good this great road'; instead of which you have, by the imbecility of your conduct and operations, created and left impassable barriers."[4]

MILITARY RECORD OF COLONEL LEAVENWORTH.

Powell's *List of Officers of the U. S. Army.*

"LEAVENWORTH, HENRY. (Born in Conn. Appointed from New York.) Capt. 25th U. S. Inf., 25 April, 1812. Maj. 9th Inf., 15 Aug., 1813. Trans. to 2nd Inf., May 17, 1815. Lieut. Col. 5th Inf., 10 Feb., 1818. Trans. to 6th Inf., 1st Oct., 1821. Col. 3rd Inf., 16 Dec., 1825. Died 21 July, 1834. Bvt. Lieut. Col., 15 July, 1814, for distinguished and meritorious service at the Battle of Chippewa. Bvt. Col., 25 July, 1814, for distinguished service at Niagara Falls. Bvt. Brig. Gen., 25 July, 1824, for ten years' faithful service in one grade."

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[4] My authorities for the foregoing account of the campaign against the Aricaras are the orders, reports, and correspondence of Colonel Leavenworth; correspondence of Ashley and Pilcher; and various items of information gleaned from the newspapers of the time printed in St. Louis and Franklin, Missouri.

CHAPTER IV.

THE YELLOWSTONE EXPEDITION OF 1825.

Purpose of the expedition — Keelboat transportation — Progress of the expedition — Treaty with the Poncas — Arrival at Fort Kiowa — Treaties with the Sioux — Buffalo hunt — Treaties with Cheyennes and Ogallalahs — Indian feast — Footprints in the rocks — Treaty with the Aricaras — Arrival at the Mandans — Trouble with the Crows — Mosquitoes — Arrival at the Yellowstone — Meeting with General Ashley — Excursion to find the Assiniboines — Return to the mouth of the Yellowstone — Return journey — Arrival at Council Bluffs — More treaties with the Indians — Arrival at St. Louis — Report of the expedition.

THIS expedition, like that of Lewis and Clark a score of years before, is one which can be reviewed with great satisfaction, because it was conducted in an eminently sensible and practical way, and because it fully accomplished its purpose. The restlessness of the Missouri tribes ever since the War of 1812, and their frequent acts of hostility to the whites, culminating in the Blackfoot and Aricara outrages of 1823, caused the government to adopt more effective measures for their reduction and pacification. In 1824 Congress passed an act authorizing treaties to be formed with the Missouri tribes, and the President appointed Gen. Henry Atkinson of the Army, and Major Benjamin O'Fallon, Indian agent, commissioners to visit and conclude the treaties.

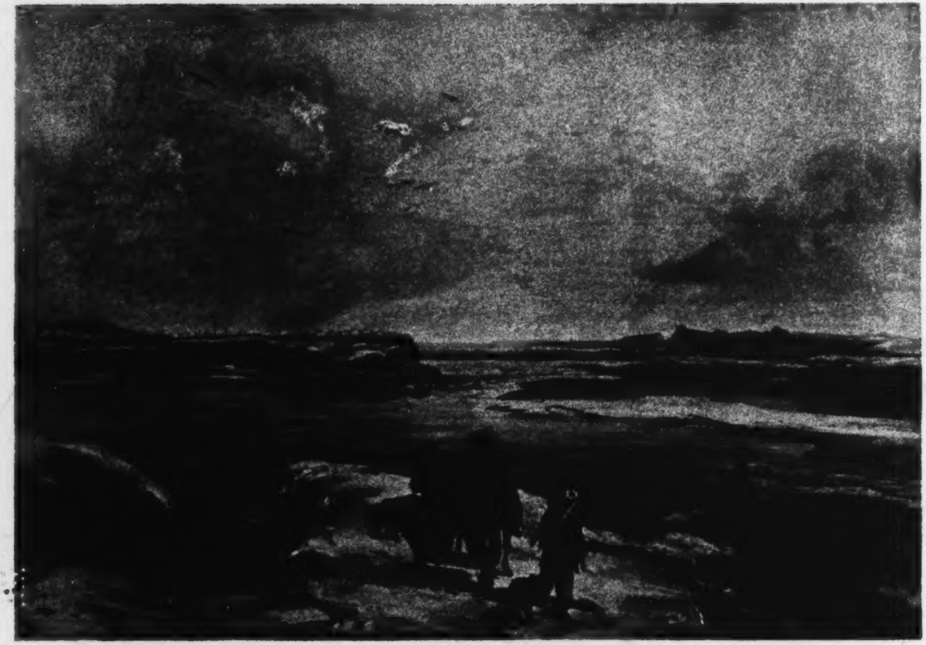
The appointments were made too late in the year 1824 to permit the accomplishment of the work during that season, but measures were taken to carry it promptly into effect with the opening of spring. The commissioners left St. Louis about the 20th of March, 1825, and arrived at Council Bluffs on the 19th of April. The last invoice of their goods arrived on the 13th of May, and preparations were completed for the departure of the expedition on the following day. The transports consisted of eight keelboats, which had, in addition to the usual appliances of sails, cordelles, poles, etc., a set of paddle wheels operated by hand power. The boats were named after the fur-bearing animals most commonly met in the Missouri river trade — *Beaver, Buffalo, Elk, Mink, Muskrat, Otter, Raccoon,* and *White Bear.* As animals of these varieties were constantly encountered along the route, an amusing confusion of names occurs now and then in the journal; as for instance: "Two elk were killed by Lieutenant Swearinger and a man of the *Muskrat* crew"; "an antelope was killed this morning by a hunter from the transport *Elk*"; "the *Mink* and *Beaver* halted and sent out to bring in a buffalo"; "the whole flotilla, *Bear, Buffalo, Elk, Mink,* etc., stopped at Elk Island to secure three buffalo found there"; "the *Muskrat* halted and took in two elk, three white bears and one deer that our hunters had killed"; General Ashley's beaver were "shipped on board the *Mink, Muskrat,* and *Raccoon.*"

The commission set out from Council Bluffs with an escort of 476 men, of whom forty were mounted and went by land, keeping always within reach of the boats. Among the officers of the expedition besides General Atkinson were Colonel Leavenworth, Majors Kearney, Langham and Ketchum; Captains Armstrong, Riley, Mason, Gaunt, Pentland, Kennedy, and Culbertson; Lieutenants Harris, Swearinger, Wragg, Greyson, Waters, Holmes, and Doctor Gale.

The expedition proceeded without serious accident, although with much disarrangement of the machinery, and arrived at the Ponca village on the 8th of June. Captain Armstrong with the mounted troops and with Edward Rose, the interpreter, arrived thirteen days before. The force landed and went into camp just below the mouth of Paint creek, and arrangements were made to hold a council and form a treaty with the Indians on the following day. Here a military display was given, which, with the considerable force of troops present, made an excellent impression upon the Indians. The ceremony is thus recorded in the journal: "The troops were paraded in brigade in uniform at nine this morning, and were reviewed by General Atkinson in the rear of the Ponca village. They appeared extremely well and excited great curiosity in the Indians, the whole tribe, men, women and children, leaving the village to witness the scene." Following immediately upon the review a council was held with the Indians at which nearly the whole tribe were present. The desired treaty was unanimously approved and the business was concluded with present-making, all in the most satisfactory manner.

The necessary repairs to the boats delayed departure until 1 P. M. of the 10th, when the expedition resumed its course and camped that night a little above the Niobrara (L'Eau qui Court). Hither the Indians followed and entertained the expedition with native dances. The party then made its way without notable incident to Fort Kiowa, at this time in charge of a Mr. Wilson, trader of the American Fur Company.

Some runners were dispatched to bring in the Tetons, Yanktons, and Yanktonais, while Rose, the interpreter. was sent to tell the Cheyennes to meet the commission at the Aricara villages. After some delay the Indians arrived, and on the 20th military ceremonies were again gone through with. The brigade was reviewed by General Atkinson and staff on horseback. "The display was very fine, the troops being in fine order," and the impression on the Indians was excellent. The council was then organized and the credentials of the chiefs examined. At this time there was delivered to the Yanktons a girl of their tribe who had been a prisoner among the Otoes, and whom the expedition had taken up the river. That night the Indians were treated to a display of rockets, which greatly impressed them.



FORT CLARK

Winter view from across the Missouri

(Maximilian—Winter 1833-34)

The next day the treaty was concluded with these tribes, and presents were distributed among them, including one gun for each chief. If the military made a good impression upon the Indians, the Indians made no less favorable an impression upon the whites. "These tribes deport themselves with gravity and dignity," says the journal, "while they displayed a quality of taste in their dress which did great credit to their untutored view of things."

The expedition resumed its journey on the 22nd, and on the following day reached the Great Bend of the Missouri. Here a portion of the passengers, as generally happens in navigating the river, crossed the narrow neck of land while the boats passed around. They left the flotilla on the 24th and were taken up on the boats on the 26th. At Elk Island the party had their first real excitement in buffalo hunting. Majors O'Fallon and Ketchum were walking along the shore when they descried three buffalo on the island. One of them remained to watch the animals while the other went to notify the party. It being about noon the flotilla halted for dinner, while a small party under Major Ketchum crossed to the island to get the buffalo. "The party landed and went in pursuit, but their design was partly frustrated by the imprudence of Lieutenant Wragg, who crossed over to the island shortly after, and ran forward and fired upon the buffalo." This frightened the animals, and they immediately leaped into the water. One swam toward the boats, was shot, but sank into the river, and did not rise. The remaining two came back to the island, where one was killed, and the other escaped in a wounded condition. The troops being in want of fresh meat, Lieutenant Wragg's performance on this occasion did not redound much to his credit in their eyes.

On the 30th of June the expedition arrived at the mouth of the Teton river about two and a half miles above which the American Fur Company at this date had a trading establishment. Here the party waited until the Sioux, Cheyennes and Ogallalahs could be brought in. On the first day of the arrival a party under Lieutenant Waters secured six buffalo. The journal says that "Rose, an interpreter, one of the party, we understand, covered himself with bushes and crawled into the gang of eleven bulls, and shot down the six on the same ground before the others ran off." The six buffalo weighed, dressed, 3,300 pounds.

While waiting for the arrival of all the Indians the commissioners were treated to a feast by the Ogallalahs, of which the following account is given in the journal: "It consisted of the flesh of thirteen dogs boiled in plain water in seven kettles, much done. Our drink was water from the Missouri brought up in the paunches of buffalo, which gave it a disagreeable taste. . . . We were occupied about an hour and a half at the feast, when ourselves and the officers returned to camp and sat down and partook of wine and fruit at a table provided by the camp." The journal is here provokingly silent in not informing us how, after such a feast, the surfeited guests could have found an immediate appetite for such ordinary viands as wine and fruit. This banquet was part of the celebration of July 4th, 1825.

The Indians having been finally gathered together, the usual review took place on the 5th, with the added feature of a mounted artillery drill, by which "the Indians were struck with great awe." On the 6th the council and treaties took place, and presents were given and received. "This evening," the journal says, "Lieutenant Holmes threw six shells from the howitzer in the presence of the Indians. They exploded handsomely and made a deep impression upon the savages."

The expedition set out at about 9 A. M. on the 7th. "The exhibition was beautiful. The wind being fair, the boats put off in regular succession, under sail and under the wheels, and ran up a stretch of 19½ miles in view of more than three thousand Indians who lined the shore." This day the cavalry horses were mostly sent back to Council Bluffs, only enough horses being retained to pack in the game, and to flank the river. The party arrived at Hidden creek on the 11th of July, and here, on the following day, after the usual military ceremonies, a treaty was made with a band of the Sioux called the Fire Hearts, numbering about 150 souls. From one of the young men Major O'Fallon took a British medal.

The journal notes the following occurrence at this place: "Major O'Fallon and General Atkinson obtained two Indian horses and rode three-quarters of a mile back to the hills in rear of our position to look at the impression of footsteps on a rock. We found the impression of three tracks of the foot of a common-sized man. The first, near the upper edge of the rock, is made by the right foot, and is about an inch deep, making a full impression of the whole track, with the full impression of the five toes ¾ inch deep. The next track is of the left foot, and about 3½ feet from the first—impression full and deep as the first. The next footprint of the right foot is not visible, but at about six feet from the second track an impression is again made by the left foot as large and plain as the others. This is near the lower edge of the rock which of itself is about 11 feet long by 9, lying at an angle of about 30 degrees of elevation."

The expedition arrived at the Aricara village on the 15th of July, where treaties were made with these Indians and with the Hunkpapas, after the usual ceremonies. The journey was resumed on the 18th. No incidents of special importance occurred from this point to the Mandan villages, where the expedition arrived on the 26th of July. Here it was expected to make treaties with the Mandans, Minnetarees and Crows. The latter tribe was some distance off, and seemed reluctant to come in, for although repeatedly sent for they did not arrive until the 3rd of August. In the meanwhile treaties were made with the other tribes and a large amount of buffalo hunting was indulged in. After the arrival of the Crows the usual military ceremonies were gone through with and a treaty was made with that nation.

At this time there ensued an occurrence that has passed into nearly all the narrative literature of that period. It is thus related in the journal: "Two Iroquois prisoners were demanded of the Crows. From this or some other cause unknown to me, the Crows became very hostile in their conduct, and from their attempting to take the presents before they were told to do so, Major O'Fallon struck three or four of the chiefs over the head with his pistol. About this time General Atkinson, who had been absent from the council to get his dinner, on returning to the council saw the commotion and ordered the troops under arms. This probably saved bloodshed."

The occurrence as it has found its place in literature is best stated by Irving in *Captain Bonneville*, from which it appears that Rose had a hand in the affair. Irving's narrative runs thus: "The last anecdote we have of Rose is from an Indian trader. When General Atkinson made his military expedition up the Missouri, in 1825, to protect the fur trade, he held a conference with the Crow nation at which Rose figured as Indian dignitary and Crow interpreter. The military were stationed at some little distance from the scene of the 'big talk.' While the General and the chiefs were smoking pipes and making speeches, the officers, supposing that all was friendly, left the troops and drew near the scene of ceremonial. Some of the more knowing Crows, perceiving this, stole quietly to the camp, and, unobserved, contrived to stop the touch-holes of the field pieces with dirt. Shortly after a misunderstanding occurred in the conference; some of the Indians, knowing the cannon to be useless, became insolent. A tumult arose. In the confusion Colonel O'Fallon snapped a pistol in the face of a brave and knocked him down with the butt end. The Crows were all in a fury. A chance medley fight was on the point of taking place, when Rose, his natural sympathies as a white man suddenly recurring, broke the stock of his fusee over the head of a Crow warrior, and laid so vigorously about him with the barrel that he soon put the whole throng to flight. Luckily, as no lives had been lost, this sturdy rib-roasting calmed the fury of the Crows and the tumult ended without serious consequences."

The expedition left the Mandan villages on the 6th of August and reached the mouth of the Yellowstone on the 17th without special incident. Game everywhere abounded and there was plenty of hunting. We find in the journal of the 10th a reference to that pest which has disturbed the peace of every traveler on the Missouri. "The hunters are too much annoyed by mosquitoes," it says, "to remain in the bottoms for any length of time. These insects are more numerous on this river from the Poncas up, indeed on the plains and on the highest hills, than I have witnessed them anywhere else in my travels. They make no singing noise, but strike you as soon as they come up, and penetrate the skin at once."

After passing the mouth of the Yellowstone, the expedition "came to at Ashley's old fort, a mile above the mouth of that river, on the bank of the Missouri. This position is the most beautiful spot we have seen on the river, being a tongue of land between the two rivers, a perfectly level plain, elevated above high water, and extending back two miles to a gentle ascent that rises, at the distance of two miles, 100 feet. Three sides of the fort, or picket work, remain intact. The west side has been burned down. One house is standing, and three appear to have been burnt, as also the gate of the work."

While still at this place the party were agreeably surprised by the arrival of a band of hunters descending the Yellowstone in boats with a cargo of furs. It was no other than General Ashley, who had just arrived from the Salt Lake valley with a party of twenty-four men and with one hundred packs of beaver. General Atkinson offered him transportation for his party and property if he would await the return of the troops from an excursion farther up the river. This he readily assented to, as it gave him protection the rest of the way to the settlements.

From such information as General Ashley could give it was thought that the Blackfeet must be above the Falls of the Missouri, and that therefore there was no prospect of seeing them. But it was thought that they might run across the Assiniboines. Accordingly a part of the force set out on the 20th accompanied by General Ashley, and ascended the river about one hundred and twenty miles. Finding no indication of the presence of Indians they turned about on the 24th and arrived at the mouth of the Yellowstone on the 26th. The next day the whole party commenced the descent of the Missouri, "at forty minutes past five A. M.," having "embarked the horses on board of the *Buffalo, Elk, Otter,* and *Beaver,*" with Ashley's beaver "on board the *Mink, Muskrat,* and *Raccoon.*"

No incident worthy of mention occurred on the way down, except the wrecking of the *Muskrat* on a snag three miles above the mouth of James river. The boat was repaired and General Ashley's fur was saved. The expedition arrived at Council Bluffs on the 19th of September. Here councils were held and treaties signed with the Otoes September 26th, with the Pawnees September 30th, and with the Omahas October 6th. General Ashley left for St. Louis on the 22nd of September. On the 7th of October at 4 P. M., General Atkinson, Major O'Fallon, and three officers, with eight effective men and the invalids, set out in the transport *Antelope* for St. Louis, where they arrived at 5 P. M. on the 20th of October, just seven months after their departure.

On the 7th of November the commissioners forwarded the treaties which they had concluded to Washington with a comprehensive report upon the expedition. They were able to give the gratifying statement that they had found all the tribes they had hoped to except two; that they had everywhere formed satisfactory treaties; that they had left a strong impression among the Indians of the friendship, and at the same time of the power, of the United States; and that on the whole expedition "not a boat or man was lost, nor did any accident occur of any sort of consequence." The report gives a succinct account of the conditions of the tribes at that time and makes recommendations in regard to them. The commissioners found no evidence that the British interfered in the least with any of the tribes whom they saw.

On the 23rd of November General Atkinson transmitted from the headquarters of the Western Department at Louisville, Kentucky, to General Brown, commanding the army of the United States, a copy of the above report, with some additional comments of importance. He discussed the propriety of establishing a military post higher up the river than Council Bluffs, and thought that it was not a necessary measure. If one were to be established, however, he thought that it ought to be at the mouth of the Yellowstone, with a dependent post near the Great Falls. But he believed that better results would follow from an occasional display of military force such as had just taken place, than from the permanent presence of troops among the Indians. His advice was followed.

General Atkinson referred to the valuable geographical and other information which he had derived from General Ashley and J. S. Smith pertaining to routes, the location of South Pass, the extent of British trade on the Columbia, and other matters. He stated that General Ashley had in preparation a topographical sketch of the country that he had visited and that this would be forwarded as soon as received. It is to be hoped that this sketch was made and that it will yet come to light.

On the whole the expedition was a distinct success. It had undertaken to accomplish a definite thing and had accomplished it promptly and thoroughly. It was a conspicuous exception among the various enterprises with which we are here called upon to deal.

MILITARY RECORD OF GENERAL ATKINSON.

Powell's *List of Officers of the U. S. Army.*

"ATKINSON, HENRY. (Born in N. C. Appointed from N. C.) Capt., 3rd Inf., 1 July, 1808. Col. I. G. 25 April, 1813. Col. 4th Inf., 15 April, 1814. Trans. to 37th Inf., 22 April, 1814. Trans. to 6th Inf., 17 May, 1815. Brig. Gen. 13 May, 1820. Col. A. G., 1 June, 1821, which he declined, and on 16 Aug., 1821, was assigned as Col. 6th Inf. Retained as Col., 21 Aug., with Bvt. rank of Brig. Gen., 13 May, 1820. Died 14 June, 1842."

CHAPTER V.

THE SMALLPOX SCOURGE OF 1837.

Effects of vice and disease upon the Indian — The smallpox — Origin of the plague of 1837 — Action of the American Fur Company — The disease among the Mandans — Terrible scenes — The Aricaras attacked — Smallpox at Fort Union — Horrible expedient — Disastrous results — Disease spreads among the Assiniboines — Brazeau and Larpenteur — The Blackfeet and Crows attacked — Effect upon the various tribes — Effect upon the trade — Mortality among the various tribes.

THE vices and diseases that came to the Indian with the white man well-nigh resulted in the extermination of the race. The wars among the tribes, the wars between the tribes and the whites, were the merest bagatelle in comparison with these desolating influences which sapped the vitality of the people.

The proportionate destructiveness of these various agencies of ruin is not easy to determine. The effects of alcohol and immoral diseases were vast and universal, but not of a character to be reached by statistics. But that they corrupted the life of the people, enervated their physical force, poisoned their ambitions, rendered them an easy prey to the hard environment of their lives, and in the aggregate reduced the native population at an alarming rate, the testimony of contemporary observers conclusively proves. It is only the arrest of these influences in recent times by the better control now exercised on the reservations, that has turned the tide and has again placed the native population upon a basis of increase.

While there are no precise data as to the destructiveness of the influences just noted, there was one plague that was so rapid and complete that its effects are known with considerable accuracy. This was the smallpox scourge of 1837. This terrible pestilence had visited the western tribes before, spreading destruction and terror in its path. The first great epidemic occurred about the year 1800, when it swept over the country to the Pacific and destroyed the power of several tribes. Less terrible visitations occurred from time to time, but the most destructive of all was in 1837. So deadly was the pestilence at this time that many thought it must be something more terrible than smallpox, for it seemed to outdo any previous record of that disease.

The ravages of the scourge were principally confined to the upper Missouri river. The information relating to it, in the form of letters from eye-witnesses, is so graphic and complete that the story will be told mainly in their language.[1]

The plague was introduced through the annual steamboat, *St. Peters*, of the American Fur Company, which, according to Larpenteur, arrived at Fort Union on the 24th of June, 1837. Some accounts say that there was but a single case on board, but it appears certain that there were several. The course of the American Fur Company on this occasion was in many respects culpable, for, knowing the terrible effects of the disease, it should not have permitted the infected boat to visit the tribes. The situation, however, was a very difficult one to deal with. The Indians expected the boat and knew that it had many goods for them, and if it had failed to arrive they could never have been made to understand that it was not because of an attempt to rob them. Moreover, to have returned and sent up another steamboat would have been impossible, for the river would have been too low by that time. As the company would be the greatest sufferer from an epidemic among the Indians, they can not be accused of any selfish motives in the course they pursued. Nevertheless that course was very ill-advised. It would have been better to have put the goods on shore, and have fumigated them, and then to have taken them up in keelboats. Such, however, was not the decision. Although the disease had broken out before the boat reached Pierre, and had several victims before it reached the Mandans, it pursued its way clear through to Union, carrying with it one of the most awful scourges that ever befell any people.

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[1] My authorities are principally letters from the American Fur Company's posts at Union, Pierre, and Clark. In the preface of Maximilian's work, English edition, 1843, there is a powerful pen picture in the form of a letter written the following year, June 6, 1838, from New Orleans. In Audubon's Missouri Journals there is an account of the scourge among the Mandans, received from Francis A. Chardon, in charge of Fort Clark at the time. Like most history which is furnished by individual traders the attempt to magnify the narrator's part in the events related robs the narrative of much of its reliability. Charles Larpenteur, who was at Union at the time, gives some valuable data concerning the commencement of the plague. See *Forty Years a Fur Trader*, Coues, 1898.

The company's officers tried to avert the calamity by the impossible expedient of keeping the Indians away from the boat. But the Indians could not be restrained. They knew that the boat had goods for them, and suspected that it was all a ruse to cheat them. It was in vain to expostulate, implore and explain. They were deaf to all entreaty. When the boat arrived at Fort Clark a Mandan chief stole the blanket of a watchman upon the boat who was dying of the disease. Mr. Chardon made every effort for the immediate return of the blanket, promised pardon for the theft, and new blankets in its place, but all to no purpose. He sent messengers warning the people to keep away, and used every argument in his power, but the whole village came down to the river.

The disease broke out among the Mandans about June 15, and continued as long as there was any one left to attack. It raged with a virulence never before known. Deaths were almost instantaneous. The victim was seized with pains in the head and back, and in a few hours was dead. The body immediately turned black and swelled to thrice its natural size. Nearly everyone who was attacked died.

When the Indians found that the warnings of the whites were true, and realized the character of the calamity that was upon them, it produced the most profound effect upon their feelings. Some were for taking summary vengeance upon the whites, but before they could carry out their purpose the hand of death was upon them. Others who saw it felt that the Great Spirit had stricken them for attempting to injure their friends. They would then supplicate the whites to defend them, imploring their forgiveness for not having listened to them. But the whites were now powerless. The disease spread rapidly. Hundreds died daily. It was impossible to bury them, and the bodies were thrown in heaps over a cliff and the terrible stench infected the air for miles around.

In the presence of this disaster, without power to stay or avert it, the Indians became desperate. Many committed suicide by shooting, stabbing, or drowning. One chief, before he was stricken, but feeling that he soon would be, commanded his wife to dig his grave. Sorrowfully she obeyed his command, and when the work was done her warrior threw himself into it, and seizing his knife, stabbed himself to death. His broken-hearted squaw went back to her tent and child, where both were to meet a more terrible fate ere another sun should pass over their heads. Two young men just stricken with the disease conferred with each other as to the best way to end their existence, and having agreed on the method, fearlessly carried it into execution. Every day was crowded with these pathetic and soul-stirring incidents as the pestilence carried away victim after victim. Tenderness and compassion at last became blurred in the presence of the terrible calamity. The Indians sought to avoid each other by wandering singly upon the prairie. and finding subsistence wherever they could.

Thus the great tribe of the Mandans was literally led to the slaughter. Only about thirty persons remained, and these were mostly boys and old men. "No language can picture," says one writer, "the scene of desolation which the country presents. In whatever direction we go we see nothing but melancholy wrecks of human life. The tents are still standing on every hill, but no rising smoke announces the presence of human beings, and no sounds, but the croaking of the raven and the howling of the wolf, interrupt the fearful silence."

Of all the tribes the Mandans suffered the most severely, and came very near actual extermination. A band of the Aricaras were encamped near by, and for some unaccountable reason escaped the disease until after it had wrought terrific ravages among the Mandans. The latter were suspicious of this, and thought that the whites were in league with the Aricaras. But they were soon undeceived, for the pestilence broke out among them later, and nearly annihilated that tribe as well. It also made great inroads among the Minnetarees.

The introduction of smallpox at Fort Union would seem to have been as certain as any sublunary sequence of cause and effect, but no adequate measures were taken to prevent it. Besides the infected cargo which had to be unloaded, one of the passengers, Jacob Halsey, well known on the river as clerk and partner of the Upper Missouri Outfit, was already sick when he arrived, but nevertheless took up his residence at the fort. Halsey had been vaccinated and the disease was not malignant in his case, although it was a severe shock to a constitution naturally not strong and further weakened by habitual dissipation. As Halsey's was the only case, it was thought that the spread of the disease could be circumvented. But Mr. E. T. Denig, another well-known clerk of the company, had it, though not fatally, and then a squaw was carried off with it. The only Indians at the post at the time were some thirty squaws, and now as the spread of the infection was hopelessly certain, "prompt measures were adopted," in the language of Larpenteur, "to prevent an epidemic." These measures were no other than the vaccination of all the squaws with the smallpox virus itself, there being no regular vaccine matter at the fort. The poor squaws knew no better and meekly submitted to the operation. "Their systems" were "prepared according to Dr. Thomas' Medical Book," and they were vaccinated from Halsey himself. This course was adopted, Larpenteur assures us, with cynical coolness, "with a view to have it all over and everything all cleaned up before any Indians should come in, on their fall trade, which commenced early in September." Such is the astonishing confession of one of the American Fur Company's servants, and such was the desperate length to which the traders would go when the interests of their business could be promoted. Thirty squaws, imprisoned within the palisades, were deliberately sacrificed to one of the most loathsome pests in nature, in order "to have it all over and everything cleaned up" before the company's trade should be injured.

But this heroic purpose utterly miscarried. Larpenteur says that the mistake made was in not vaccinating from a person of sound physical constitution, which Halsey did not have, as if a disease which was at that moment raging farther down the river with unprecedented power could be much intensified by being communicated from an unsound constitution! The result of this culpable oversight was, in the terse and unsentimental language of Larpenteur, that "the operation proved fatal to most of our patients."[2] It seems never to have occurred to him that he and his abettors were red-handed violators of the Sixth Commandment. He goes on to say: "About 15 days afterward there was such a stench in the fort that it could be smelt at a distance of 300 yards. It was awful — the scene in the fort, where some went crazy, and others were half eaten up by maggots before they died." This was during the hottest part of summer.

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[2] Halsey's own evidence, as written some five months later, is different. He says: "A few days afterward there were 27 persons ill with it, out of which number 4 proved fatal." But Halsey had good reason to conceal the true results of the desperate act for which he, as in charge of the fort, was responsible.

As if fate were bent on making the worst of a bad situation, the Indians began coming in to trade while the epidemic was at its height. Halsey says that the fort was absolutely closed to them and they were entreated to keep away, but that probably the "air was infected" with the disease "for half a mile without the pickets." Larpenteur says that they did open the door to a celebrated chief, "but on showing him a little boy who had not recovered, and whose face was still one solid scab, by holding him over the pickets, the Indians finally concluded to leave." Whatever the facts, the fearful truth is that the pestilence got abroad. It first spread among the Assiniboines, who were the Indians that had come to the fort, and it raged among them until winter. Halsey, who left Union in October, says that at that time it was "raging with the greatest destructiveness imaginable — at least ten out of twelve die with it."

At Fort Union in these trying times one John Brazeau, a familiar name in those days on the upper rivers, was undertaker, and seemed to take a fiendish satisfaction in his new occupation. "How many?" Larpenteur would ask him of a morning now and then. "Only three, sir, but according to appearances at the hospital, I think I shall have a full load tomorrow or next day." These two worthies missed their opportunity in life by coming upon the stage at the wrong time and place. They would have found a more congenial atmosphere among the gruesome scenes around the French guillotines of Ninety-Three.

In spite of the destructive ravages of the disease among the Assiniboines they still came in to trade, and the business did not fall off as much as had been expected. Larpenteur says that when the Indians were asked how it was, under the circumstances, that "there were so many robes brought in, they would say laughingly that they expected to die soon and wanted to have a frolic till the end came."

The pestilence reached the Blackfeet through another most culpable act of negligence on the part of the company's officers. An Indian of that nation was permitted to get on the *St. Peters* at the mouth of the Little Missouri and then to go to his people before it was known whether he had taken the disease or not. The Crow post, Van Buren, was also infected, most likely through other acts of negligence. The disease ran its usual course there, but the Crows at the time were on Wind river, and escaped until later in the fall. But before the end of the year all the tribes of the Missouri valley above the Sioux had been stricken and the extent of the calamity was well-nigh appalling.

The effect upon the tribes was various. The Assiniboines were for open hostility to the whites, to whom they rightly attributed the direful visitation. They did not, however, come to any overt act. The Blackfeet, on the other hand, were completely humbled. One band had been on the point of making war upon the whites, and the smallpox appealed to them as the judgment of Heaven for thus attempting to injure their friends. For the most part all the tribes behaved remarkably well, and the trade did not suffer so much as had been expected. In the following winter it began to fall off, and although buffalo were more plenty than had been known for years, there were few Indians to hunt them.

It was a severe blow to the traders. In a letter of February 25, 1838, from Pratte, Chouteau and Company to Mr. Pierre Chouteau, Jr., one of the firm, then on his way to New York, we read: "Late last evening Provost arrived, and this morning (Sunday) we have all been occupied in perusing the melancholy details of plague, pestilence and devastation, ruined hopes and blasted expectations." It then recounts the loss of the various tribes, and the prospects for the ensuing year. And in an earlier communication to Halsey on the upper Missouri, the company said that the calamity was "calculated to fill us with dismay as regards the trade of the Missouri for some years to come. We can only view it as a visitation of Providence with which, though it be vain for us to contend, it behooves us to make the best of existing circumstances; to put forth all our energies; and by pursuing a course of strict economy in our expenditures, with kind and conciliatory conduct to the Indians who have escaped this dreadful pestilence, endeavor, by prudence, fortitude, and perseverance, to support ourselves under the melancholy scourge."

The real mortality during this memorable plague has been variously estimated. Audubon, upon the authority of Mitchell, places it, among all tribes, at 150,000, an impossible figure, for it would have meant the total annihilation of all the tribes where it prevailed. Another estimate was 60,000. This also seems impossible. Judging from detailed estimates, gleaned from various sources, it seems hardly probable that the total mortality of the Missouri river tribes amounted to more than 15,000. But considering the population of these several tribes—Blackfeet, Crows, Assiniboines, Mandans, Minnetarees, and Aricaras — even this diminished estimate makes a mortality almost without parallel in the history of plagues. It fully justifies the powerful word picture which is given in the letter already quoted from the works of Maximilian: "The destroying angel has visited the unfortunate sons of the wilderness with terrors never before known, and has converted the extensive hunting grounds, as well as the peaceful settlements of these tribes, into desolate and boundless cemeteries. . . . The warlike spirit which but lately animated the several Indian tribes, and but a few months ago gave reason to apprehend the breaking out of a sanguinary war, is broken. The mighty warriors are now the prey of the greedy wolves, and the few survivors, in utter despair, throw themselves on the pity of the whites, who, however, can do little for them. The vast preparations for the protection of the western frontier are superfluous; another arm has undertaken the defense of the white inhabitants of the frontier; and the funeral torch, that lights the red man to his dreary grave, has become the auspicious star of the advancing settler and the roving trader of the white race."

CHAPTER VI.

MILITARY OCCUPATION.

Early military expeditions — Question of advanced military occupation — Post at Council Bluffs — Founding of Fort Leavenworth — Col. Dodge's expedition from Fort Gibson — Deadly malaria — Col. Dodge's expedition of 1835 — Summary of military occupation.

AS early as the year 1807 the armed forces of the United States had ascended the whole course of the Missouri river, had crossed to the Pacific, had ascended the Arkansas river nearly to its source and had penetrated to the gates of Santa Fe. But these expeditions were chiefly in the nature of explorations, and were not intended to be followed up by immediate military occupation.

In 1807 a small detachment of troops was sent up the Missouri to conduct back to his home the Mandan chief whom Lewis and Clark had brought down the previous year. This expedition met with disaster at the Aricara villages and was forced to return. No permanent occupation of any advanced point was intended in this case. There was at this time no post west of the immediate vicinity of the Mississippi in the valley of the Missouri.

In 1808 Fort Osage, or Fort Clark, as it was also called, was founded and garrisoned with a small force. Here also was established the only government factory for the Indian trade west of the Mississippi river. The post was not occupied continuously and was abandoned altogether upon the founding of Fort Leavenworth.[1]

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[1] The following references indicate the unsettled state of this post:

Letter from George C. Sibley, government factor at Fort Osage, September 25, 1813: "I will therefore briefly tell you now that early

In 1819 took place the important military expedition under General Atkinson known as the Yellowstone Expedition. It resulted in the establishment of a post of eight years' duration near the present site of Omaha, Nebraska. The post was known successively under the names of Camp Missouri, Fort Atkinson, and Fort Calhoun, the last name having descended to the present day.

The next important military move was the campaign against the Aricaras under Colonel Leavenworth in 1823. It resulted in no permanent advance.

In 1825 General Atkinson and Major O'Fallon, commissioned to conclude treaties with the Missouri Indians, proceeded with a formidable military escort from Fort Atkinson to a point one hundred and twenty miles above the mouth of the Yellowstone. The expedition resulted in permanent occupation of none of the country passed through.

The Yellowstone expeditions had their origin in a desire on the part of the government, created largely by the agitation of the frontier settlements, to overawe the tribes of the Missouri by acquainting them with the military power of the United States, to counteract British influence along the frontier, and to establish a line of posts leading to the headwaters of the Missouri and possibly beyond. Estimates had been prepared by the War Department showing the cost of carrying such a movement across the continent. But the plan never succeeded. General Atkinson upon his return in 1825 set at rest the rumors of British intrigue along the borders, for he had not succeeded in find-

in last June Fort Osage was evacuated and the factory broken up."

Letter from Sibley, July 10, 1819: "When they [the Yellowstone Expedition] arrive, this fort will be broken up, and I shall be left here pretty much alone."

The fort was as good as abandoned in 1822, for Jacob Fowler, who passed there in July of that year, informs us that "the garrison at this time Was commanded by one officer of the united States armey—Having two men under Command Both of them Having disarted a few days ago and Carreyed off all His amenition."—*Journal of Jacob Fowler*, p. 173.

ing any evidence of it. He advised against the necessity of military posts in that quarter, but recommended the mouth of the Yellowstone, if one were decided on. For protection of the traders he rightly considered the Three Forks of the Missouri as the most important location; but even here he considered that the benefits would fall short of the sacrifice. Acting upon General Atkinson's advice, the government did not advance beyond Council Bluffs.

Fort Atkinson was occupied until 1827, mostly by the 6th Infantry; but the unhealthiness of the place, and other considerations, led to its abandonment, which took place on June 27th of that year, the regiment returning to Jefferson Barracks.

Fort Leavenworth was established in pursuance of orders from the headquarters of the Army, dated March 7, 1827, directing Colonel Leavenworth to select a site within twenty miles above or below the mouth of the Little Platte river. On the 17th of April four companies of the Third Regiment, U. S. Infantry, left Jefferson Barracks under the immediate command of Captain W. G. Belknap for the purpose of establishing and garrisoning the post. Colonel Leavenworth was unable to find a suitable location on the east bank, and finally chose the site where Fort Leavenworth now stands. The choice was a fortunate one and does credit to the officer whose name was given to the fort. The selection was reported on May 8th to the War Department and was duly approved there. Major Ketchum, in the meanwhile, arrived from Council Bluffs, May 4th, with the public property from that place and the transfer from old Fort Atkinson to new Fort Leavenworth was thus accomplished.

The establishment of this post was mainly due to the growing importance of the locality near the mouth of the Kansas river as a starting point for parties bound for the mountains and for Santa Fe. Experience had shown the need of a post here rather than at Council Bluffs. The distance of twenty miles above or below the mouth of the Little Platte embraced the territory where Kansas City now stands, really a more commanding situation for the protection and control of the trade, but Colonel Leavenworth does not seem to have approved of it.

Fort Leavenworth played an exceedingly important rôle in the history of the fur trade, not so much on account of its military character as from its relation to the regulations governing the Indian trade. In particular it was charged with the inspection of cargoes, the examination of licenses, and a strict enforcement of the rules against introducing liquor into the Indian country. No military operations of importance were conducted from it during the period covered by our present work except on two occasions when military escorts accompanied the Santa Fe caravans — in 1829 and in 1834. These have been described in our Santa Fe chapters.

In 1834 Colonel Dodge conducted a military expedition from Fort Gibson westward for the purpose of reducing the Indians along the Santa Fe route to submission. The expedition left Fort Gibson June 15, 1834, and encountered several villages of Indians about July 22nd. Three days later it started back and reached Fort Gibson August 15th. George Catlin was with this expedition.

This movement, which was ordered from Washington, seems to have been very ill-advised, and it resulted most disastrously. It took place during the heat of summer and a deadly malaria prevailed all the time. Several officers, including Colonel Leavenworth and his aide and many enlisted men, died. Catlin very nearly lost his life. The following graphic description of this unfortunate expedition is from the pen of one of the officers who accompanied it:

" It is painful to dwell upon this subject. Nature would seem to have conspired with an imbecile military administration for the destruction of the regiment. On, on they marched, over the parched plains whence all moisture had shrunk, as from the touch of fire; their martial pomp and show dwindled to a dusty speck in the midst of a boundless plain; disease and death struck them as they moved; with the false mirage ever in view, with glassy eyes, and parched tongues, they seemed upon a sea of fire. They marched on, leaving three-fourths of their number stretched by disease in many sick camps; there, not only destitute of every comfort, but exposed with burning fevers to the horrors of the unnatural heat — it was the death of hope. The horses too were lost by scores. In one sick camp, they were in great danger of massacre by a horde of Comanche Indians, who had established themselves near by; and were in all probability only saved by the judgment and determination of the officer in command, the lamented Izard; and he was fortunately indebted to his experience on the Santa Fe expedition. In the face of overwhelming numbers, he kept every man who could possibly bear arms on constant guard; and opposed at the point of the bayonet the passage of a single Indian over their slight breastwork. He knew the influence of dauntless boldness over Indians, who dread every loss, and seek the attainment of their ends by cunning and management; thus on friendly pretences they sought admittance singly, with a view gradually to obtain the power to crush the small force at a blow.

" General Leavenworth and his aide stopped. They both lost their lives. Colonel Dodge, with 150 of the hardiest constitutions, persevered and overcame every obstacle; they reached the Tow-e-ash village, in a picturesque valley, amid mountainous precipices and rocks; such he discovered to be the name of a numerous tribe who altogether with the Comanches, Kiowas, and Arapahoes had hitherto been confounded under the name of Pawnees.

"There, perhaps within the boundary of Mexico, was made this first though feeble demonstration of the power and ubiquity of the white man. Some breath was expended in an effort to mediate peace between these wandering savage robbers and their red neighbors of our border; as availing as it would be to attempt to establish a truce between the howling wolf of the prairie and his prey."[2]

In 1835 Colonel Dodge made another expedition into the prairie, this time from Fort Leavenworth. His route lay up the Platte and South Platte rivers to the mountains; thence south to the Arkansas; and home by the Santa Fe Trail. The expedition is said to have been set on foot for the purpose of putting a stop to outrages by the Aricara Indians in the upper valley of the Platte.

It will thus be seen that, prior to 1843, actual military occupation of the Western country did not extend beyond Fort Leavenworth. The various expeditions into the interior, however, had served to give the military authorities a fairly accurate knowledge of the entire region. The extensive operations of the traders contributed to the same end and in later years some of them were always present with the troops in the capacity of guides wherever movements were made into new parts of the country. The government was therefore well prepared for the great military problems with which it was soon to be called upon to deal.

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[2] *Scenes and Adventures in the United States Army*, by P. St. G. Cooke, Colonel Second Dragoons U. S. A., Philadelphia, 1859.

CHAPTER VII.

GEOGRAPHICAL AND SCIENTIFIC EXPLORATIONS.

Lewis and Clark and Pike — Bradbury — Nuttall — Townsend — Brackenridge — Prince Paul of Wurtemburg — Catlin — Maximilian — Nicollet — Wislizenus — Other explorers.

THE field of official exploration was but slightly developed during the period from 1807 to 1843. The expeditions of Lewis and Clark and Pike were in the true sense exploring expeditions, and their results were of the highest importance. Though by profession soldiers, these officers were also accurate observers, and not unworthy pioneers in the field of scientific investigation which, at a later date, was so thoroughly occupied by men of more specific qualifications. Their reports upon the geology, fauna, flora, and the native tribes, were in general sound and discriminating, and justly entitle them to high standing in the history of scientific research in the Western country.

In the years 1809-11 John Bradbury the English naturalist did much important work in the valleys of the Missouri and Mississippi. Bradbury was a remarkable man — one has only to read the journal of his voyage up the Missouri in 1811 to see that. His devotion to his pursuits was the wonder of all who observed them. There was no hardship too severe for him to undergo. One can but shiver to read of his stripping and swimming unbridged and unfordable streams of the upper country in March, carrying his clothes on a stick, and then dressing and proceeding as if nothing had happened. The simple-minded voyageurs could never comprehend him, and the practical trader was constantly put to his wit's end to restrain him from dangerous excursions into the country beyond the reach of the boat's protection.

An amusing example of Bradbury's devotion to his studies is afforded in his record of his journey down the Missouri after parting with Hunt and Lisa in 1811. Henry M. Brackenridge was with him. One day a terrible storm swept down upon them almost without warning. It caught them on the leeward side of the river against high abrupt banks where no landing could be found. Their case seemed desperate, but finally they found a solitary shrub that promised strength to moor the boat to, and here they made fast and awaited in imminent peril the abating of the storm. But great as was the danger it did not deter the naturalist from examining the friendly bush, and he gives us its full botanical name in the narrative.

Bradbury's well-known book, *Travels in North America*, is one of the most useful works of this period, and one which the careful student of Louisiana history never fails to consult. It is the best existing authority on many points, and on some the only one. Irving drew largely upon it in his narrative of Hunt's voyage up the Missouri.

Thomas Nuttall, Bradbury's traveling companion on the Missouri voyage, rivaled him in his close devotion to his studies. Nuttall is the individual about whom Brackenridge relates a story that more than offsets the incident above related about Bradbury: "The day after passing the Sioux," says Brackenridge, "they met, as I have before mentioned, three hundred Aricara Indians; these were so delighted to see them that a number rushed into the river, to swim or wade to the boats; the party, supposing them to be inimical, was on the point of firing; while every one was in momentary expectation that this would take place, Nuttall, who appeared to have been examining them very attentively, turned to Miller. 'Sir,' said he, 'don't you think these Indians much fatter, and more robust than those of yesterday?'"

"To the ignorant Canadian boatman," as Brackenridge elsewhere says, "it affords a subject of merriment. *Le fou,* the fool, is the name by which he is commonly known. No sooner does the boat touch the shore than he leaps out, and when his attention is arrested by a plant or flower everything else is forgotten. The inquiry is sometimes made '*Où est le fou?*' (Where is the fool?) '*Il est après ramasser des racines.*' (He is gathering roots.)"

In 1834 Nuttall and J. K. Townsend crossed the continent with the missionaries Jason and Daniel Lee. They went under the protection of Nathaniel J. Wyeth as far as to Snake river. Both of these gentlemen published the results of their observations, and Townsend's book in particular is full of intelligent references to the events of the mountains. It is thus of historic as well as scientific value.

Henry M. Brackenridge ascended the Missouri with Lisa in 1811, and he and Bradbury were the peacemakers in the celebrated quarrel between Lisa and Hunt. Brackenridge was a young man of good education, very observing, and a promising young writer. His *View of Louisiana,* and his journal of his voyage up the Missouri, like Bradbury's *Travels,* are among our most reliable early authorities.

After 1811 no scientific parties or individuals penetrated the fur countries until 1819-20 when Major Long and his corps of scientists made their expeditions. The published results of this expedition have already been noticed.

In 1823 an individual referred to in the Chouteau correspondence as Prince Paul of Wurtemburg, went up the river and passed the winter. He returned to New Orleans in the summer of 1824. In 1829 he again went up and was found among the Mandans April 22, 1830, by Joshua Pilcher, who was then returning from his tour of the Hudson Bay Company posts. The purpose of his journey, as stated in the correspondence, was the "pursuit of knowledge." He left Fort Tecumseh in August, 1830, and was in St. Louis in October of that year. In reference to this last visit a local paper under date of January 29, 1830, had the following: "Paul William of Wurtemburg, nephew of the King of England, arrived at New Orleans the 1st inst., from Europe. About six years ago he spent some time exploring the upper regions of the Missouri, but business requiring his return to Europe, he has revisited the American hemisphere and will, in the prosecution of his former plan, cross the Rocky mountains and visit the continent on the Pacific. He is in his 33rd year." He does not seem to have crossed the continent at this time for he was back in St. Louis in the fall of 1830. There is no record of his making any other trip up the Missouri.

In 1832 George Catlin, the well-known Indian painter, ascended the Missouri to Fort Union on the first steamer that ever reached that point. He descended by skiff in the fall, having made a large number of sketches of scenes in the upper country, and many portraits of the Indians and traders. Subsequently Catlin visited other portions of Western America, and even of South America and Europe. His paintings and sketches, as well as his published works, are well known. He undoubtedly did a great work in preserving in pictorial form a condition of life that no longer exists except in history. He was a true and passionate friend of the Indian and an ardent worshiper of everything pertaining to aboriginal customs and life. His works, like those of Maximilian, will always be resorted to by students of the native races and early conditions of the Missouri valley. The contrast between the methods of these two men, however, was most marked. Maximilian was a scientist — discriminating and accurate in his observations and careful and conservative in recording his impressions. Catlin was a visionary enthusiast upon a single theme, the American Indian. He saw everything pertaining to the natives through highly colored glasses, and, as if that were not enough, he recklessly exaggerated his impressions when he attempted to record them with his pen or pencil. He was distrusted by those who knew him in the West and was more than once taken to task by his contemporaries. Audubon for example flatly insinuates that he was dishonest. Parkman characterizes him as a "garrulous and windy writer." It is regrettable that one who did so much work of real worth should have marred it by a characteristic which throws doubt upon the accuracy of it all.

In the year 1833 Maximilian, Prince of Wied, ascended the river, visiting Forts Union, McKenzie and Clark, and wintering at the latter post. He traveled at this time under the name of the Baron of Brausenburg, and is always so referred to in the correspondence. He passed a most miserable winter at Fort Clark, owing to a scarcity of provisions that amounted almost to a famine, and to insufficient shelter and a very severe winter. He was so ill at one time that his life was despaired of. He was accompanied by a small party among whom was a skilful artist by the name of Bodmer. The Prince, upon his return to Europe, published the results of his labors in the most complete and elaborate work ever prepared upon this region. It is much to be regretted that it is so inaccessible to the public. The most convenient edition to American readers is: *Travels in The Interior of North America* by Maximilian, Prince of Wied, With Numerous Engravings on Wood and a Large Map Translated from the German by H. Evans Lloyd. To Accompany the Original Series of Eighty-one Elaborately Colored Plates, Size, Imperial Folio. London, Ackermann & Co., 96 Strand, MDCCCXLIII. The work covers a great variety of subjects — narrative, anecdote, history, ethnology, geology, natural history — and omitting a few minor errors, it is exceedingly accurate, discriminating and judicious in all its scope. It ranks with *Astoria, Bonneville,* and the *Commerce of the Prairies,* as a descriptive work, while it is far ahead of the others in the elaborate character of its illustrations. In this respect it has no competitor, or only a feeble one in Catlin.

Between 1836 and 1840 J. N. Nicollet carried on several valuable explorations in the valleys of the Mississippi and Missouri rivers. In 1839 he ascended the Missouri as far as to Fort Pierre and then crossed the country by way of James river, Devil's Lake, Red river and the St. Peter's to the Mississippi. John C. Fremont served his apprenticeship on these expeditions. Nicollet was one of the most industrious, indefatigable, earnest, and accurate of the American explorers, and the map which embodied the results of his labors was, in the opinion of General G. K. Warren, "one of the greatest contributions ever made to American Geography."

In 1839 Dr. F. A. Wislizenus of St. Louis made an expedition to the Rocky mountains and in the following year published the result of his observations in a little volume printed in German and now rarely seen. It is an exceedingly important contribution to our knowledge of the period and an interesting and ably written work.

The work of Father De Smet is considered in the next chapter.

In 1842 the government entered in earnest upon its long and important work of official exploration of the country west of the Mississippi. This was the year of Fremont's first expedition to the Rocky mountains. His work pertains entirely to the period following that here considered, and it is referred to in this connection as an interesting link between the two.

CHAPTER VIII.

MISSIONARY WORK.

Early missionary effort — The Nez Perce or Flathead deputation — The popular version — The true version — The sensation caused by this deputation — The Protestant missions — Catholic missions — Father DeSmet.

IN the Far West, as in every other field which the genius of the explorer has made known to the world, the followers of the Cross have zealously proclaimed to the native races the tidings of the Christian religion. The real work of the missionaries west of the Missouri belongs to a later period than 1843, and only the foundations were laid prior to this time. Most of the Protestant denominations, and the Catholics as well, had missions among the lower tribes of the Missouri; but in only two or three instances were any important advancements made into the country beyond. Such as there were relate to the Oregon missionaries whose field of labor lay beyond the territory, and extended beyond the period, embraced in this work. The present consideration of this subject will therefore be limited to an inquiry into the origin of these missions and a reference to the early pilgrimages across the plains.

The inception of the Oregon missions, both Protestant and Catholic, is connected with an event which has about it an air of inspiring romance, well calculated to arouse the ardor of those devoted to the propagation of the Christian faith. In its orthodox form, as set forth by the latest biographer of Marcus Whitman,[1] the story is as follows: In the summer of 1832 four Nez Perce Indians[2] made their way to St. Louis for the avowed purpose of getting some one to go and preach to their people the white man's religion of which they had heard through the Catholic voyageurs from Canada. They were entertained by General Clark, who did all in his power to interest them, showing them whatever was worth seeing, and giving them the best of accommodations. They were fêted and feasted to such an extent that it made them sick, and two of their number died during the winter. As spring approached the other two prepared to return home and decided to go by way of the American Fur Company's steamer as far as they could. Before their departure General Clark gave them a banquet and at this banquet one of the Indians made a speech which has now become celebrated in the annals of missionary work among the Western Indians. The Indian is reported to have said:

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[1] *How Marcus Whitman Saved Oregon*, O. W. Nixon, Chicago, 1895.

[2] See Part V., Chapter X.

"I come to you over the trail of many moons from the setting sun. You were the friends of my fathers, who have all gone the long way. I came with an eye partly open for my people, who sit in darkness. I go back with both eyes closed. How can I go back blind, to my blind people? I made my way to you with strong arms through many enemies and strange lands that I might carry back much to them. I go back with both arms broken and empty. Two fathers came with us, they were the braves of many winters and wars. We leave them asleep here by your great waters and wigwams. They were tired in many moons and their moccasins wore out.

"My people sent me to get the 'White Man's Book of Heaven.' You took me to where you allow your women to dance as we do not ours, and the book was not there. You took me to where they worship the Great Spirit with candles and the book was not there. You showed me images of the good spirits and the picture of the good land beyond, but the book was not among them to tell us the way. I am going back the long and sad trail to my people in the dark land. You make my feet heavy with gifts and my moccasins will grow old carrying them, yet the book is not among them. When I tell my poor blind people, after one more snow, in the big council, that I did not bring the book, no word will be spoken by our old men or by our young braves. One by one they will rise up and go out in silence. My people will die in darkness, and they will go a long path to other hunting grounds. No white man will go with them, and no White Man's Book to make the way plain. I have no more words."

The day after the delivery of the speech they set out on the steamboat. George Catlin claims to have been a passenger on this same boat, and to have painted the portraits of these Indians without knowing their identity or the singular purpose of their long journey. Afterward, upon learning the truth, he was delighted at his good fortune in having accidentally procured two portraits which could hardly fail to become of historic interest. They now constitute numbers 207 and 208 in his collection.

"When this speech was translated," says Dr. Nixon, "and sent East, it was published in the *Christian Advocate* in March, 1833, with a ringing editorial from President Fisk of Wilbraham College. 'Who will respond to go beyond the Rocky mountains and carry the Book of Heaven?' It made a profound impression. It was a Macedonian cry of 'Come over and help us,' not to be resisted. Old men and women who read this call, and attended the meetings at this time, are still living, and can attest to its power. It stirred the Church as it has seldom been stirred into activity."

The result of the spiritual agitation set on foot by the news of this deputation of Indians was that the Church in the East seriously took hold of the question of sending missionaries into this new field, and as soon as the necessary preparations could be made, parties were sent out. Jason and Daniel Lee with several co-workers went out for the Methodists in 1834. Marcus Whitman and Samuel Parker *for the Presbyterians followed in 1835 and 1836.* The Catholics under De Smet followed in 1840.

Returning now to the romance of the Flathead Indians, the actual facts, so far as they can be discovered, will be stated. The Nez Perce and Flathead Indians were the most religious of all the Western tribes, observing regularly their ceremonial rites, and evincing the greatest piety and fervency in their worship. They had heard of the white man's religion through employes of the British traders and were anxious to learn more of it. It was not an uncommon thing for them to send deputations to St. Louis, nor was it so difficult a matter as one might suppose. The Rocky Mountain Fur Company went annually to the very borders of their country and they could accompany the outgoing and incoming caravans with perfect safety. The Catholic records in St. Louis show the arrival of three such deputations prior to 1840. One of these, consisting of a single Indian, arrived in the fall of 1831, but he died shortly after his arrival.[3] A second deputation, consisting of a father and his two sons, arrived in 1835, and a third, consisting of two Indians, in 1839. The year following the Catholics sent out De Smet to establish a mission among them.

The Catholics make no record of the deputation of 1832, but of the fact that one was sent there is the clearest proof. There is still extant a letter by one who saw these Indians and received from General Clark the purpose of their visit. His name was William Walker, a member of the Wyandotte nation with whom he served as interpreter. His letter shows that he was a man of intelligence. In November,

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[3] The record of this Indian's burial is still in the archives of the St. Louis cathedral, and is of interest, not only for the record itself, but as proof of the well-known confusion that prevailed at the time in regard to the identity of the Nez Perce and Flathead tribes. The Indian was buried October 31, 1831; his name was Keepeelele; and he was a "*ne Perce de la tribu des Choponeek, nation appellée Tête Plate.*"

I am indebted to Father Walter J. Hill, S. J., of the University of St. Louis, for the above interesting record.

1832, he went as representative of the Wyandottes to examine certain lands in western Missouri which the government proposed to give to those Indians in exchange for their lands in Ohio. On his way through St. Louis Mr. Walker called upon General Clark and the latter directed his attention to three Flathead chiefs who were sick in the adjoining room, a fourth having died a few days before. After looking at the Indians he returned to General Clark's room and heard from him the circumstances of their visit. Mr. Walker wrote the following account of the incident to G. P. Disoway, which was published in the *Christian Advocate*, March 1, 1833: "It appeared that some white man had penetrated into their country, and happened to be a spectator at one of their religious ceremonies, which they scrupulously perform at stated periods. He informed them that their mode of worshipping the Supreme Being was radically wrong, and instead of being acceptable and pleasing, it was displeasing to Him; he also informed them that the white people away toward the rising of the sun had been put in possession of the true mode of worshipping the Great Spirit. They had a book containing directions how to conduct themselves in order to enjoy His favor and hold converse with Him; and with this guide, no one need go astray, but every one that would follow the directions laid down there could enjoy, in this life, His favor, and after death would be received into the country where the Great Spirit resides, and live forever with Him.

"Upon receiving this information they called a national council to take this subject into consideration. Some said, if this be true, it is certainly high time we were put in possession of this mode, and if our mode of worshipping be wrong and displeasing to the Great Spirit, it is time we laid it aside. We must know something more about this; it is a matter that can not be put off; the sooner we know it the better. They accordingly deputed four of their chiefs to proceed to St. Louis to see their Great Father General

Clark, to inquire of him, having no doubt that he would tell them the whole truth about it.

"They arrived at St. Louis and presented themselves to General Clark. The latter was somewhat puzzled, being sensible of the responsibility that rested upon him; he, however, proceeded by informing them that what they had been told by the white man in their own country was true; then went into a succinct history of man from his creation down to the advent of the Saviour; explained to them all the moral precepts contained in the Bible; expounded to them the Decalogue; informed them of the advent of the Saviour, His life, precepts, His death, resurrection, ascension, and the relation He now stands to man as a mediator — that He will judge the world, etc.

"Poor fellows, they were not permitted to return home to their people with the intelligence. Two died in St. Louis, and the remaining two, though somewhat indisposed, set out for their native land. Whether they reached home or not is not known. The change of climate and diet operated very severely upon their health. Their diet when at home is chiefly vegetables and fish."

The paper containing this letter found its way to St. Louis, and elicited correspondence from several parties, including General Clark, Robert Campbell, E. W. Sehon, and others. Mr. Sehon's letter, dated at St. Louis April 16, 1833, was published in the *Advocate* on the 10th of May following and throws additional light upon the origin of the Flathead visit. It says: "General Clark informed me that the publication which had appeared in the *Advocate* was correct. Of the return of the two Indians nothing is known. He informed me that the cause of their visit was the following: Two of their number had received an education at the Jesuitical school in Montreal, Canada, had returned to the tribe, and had endeavored as far as possible to instruct their brethren how the white man approached the Great Spirit. The consequence was a spirit of inquiry was aroused, a deputation was appointed, and a tedious journey of over three thousand miles performed, to learn for themselves of Jesus and Him crucified."

President Fisk published in the *Advocate* of March 22nd the following call which is probably the "ringing editorial" referred to by Dr. Nixon:

"Hear! Hear! Who will respond to the call from beyond the Rocky mountains? The communication of Brother G. P. Disoway, including one from the Wyandotte agent, on the subject of the deputation of the Flathead Indians to General Clark, has excited in many in this section intense interest. And to be short about it, we are for having a mission established there at once. I have proposed the following plan: Let two suitable men, unencumbered with families, and possessing the spirit of martyrs, throw themselves into the nation; live with them — learn their language — preach Christ to them — and, as the way opens, introduce schools, agriculture, and the arts of civilized life. The means for these improvements can be introduced through the fur traders, and by the reinforcements with which from time to time we can strengthen the mission. Money shall be forthcoming. I will be bondsman for the Church. All we want is men. Who will go? Who? I know of one young man who I think will go; and of whom I can say, I know of none like him for the enterprise. If he will go (and we have written to him on the subject) we will only want another, and the mission will be commenced the coming season. . . . Were I young, healthy, and unencumbered, how joyfully would I go! But this honor is reserved for another. Bright will be his crown, glorious his reward."[4]

The quotations above given make possible a very complete separation of truth from fiction in this noted incident. There *was* a deputation of four Flathead chiefs to St. Louis in the fall of 1832. Two of them died while in St. Louis. The other two departed before the end of the year, but how they returned is unknown. The story that they were fêted and shown all the sights of the town is pure fiction. There was no banquet upon their departure. The famous oration was not made by one of their number but was a composition of later date by some zealous individual whose identity has not yet been established. It did not appear in the *Christian Advocate*. George Catlin did not paint the portraits of these Indians. His own trip up the Missouri river was in the *spring* of 1832; and furthermore, these Indians did not return by boat at all.

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[4] For these various letters, etc., see Appendix D.

It is not to be supposed, however, that the fictitious romance which time has built up from this simple story is necessary to account for the results which it produced. The fact was that these Indians had traveled upward of two thousand miles to find instruction in the Christian religion, and the churches felt that it was nothing less than a merited rebuke for their own inactivity and lack of religious zeal. Steps were at once taken to answer the call. In the year following that in which these publications were made the Methodists sent a strong delegation under Jason and Daniel Lee, who accompanied Wyeth's expedition as far as the Snake river and made the rest of the way under different escort. In the following year the famous expedition of Marcus Whitman and Samuel Parker went out. Both of these enterprises bore fruit in Oregon. The Methodist missions prospered. Whitman seems to have studied quite as thoroughly the temporal aspect of affairs in this new country as he did the spiritual. He did not make the journey clear through in 1835 but returned from Green river and went out the following year with important reinforcements, among whom were the Rev. H. H. Spalding and bride. Whitman himself married just before starting on his second trip.[5]

In 1842-3 Whitman returned to the United States, some say for the express purpose of urging the government to take some action in regard to Oregon, which he considered too valuable a territory to lose. Others say that his journey related solely to personal affairs and to matters connected with the American Board of Foreign Missions. Whatever it was, the business was urgent; otherwise he would not have undertaken the journey in the dead of winter. He took the southern route by way of Santa Fe. While East he visited Washington and there is little doubt that he improved the opportunity to urge the claims of Oregon upon those who were near the government. That he was given an audience by President Tyler and Secretary Webster may well be doubted, and it is certainly an extravagant claim, though put forward with great persistency in these later days, to say that "Marcus Whitman saved Oregon."

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[5] In tracing the progress of wheeled vehicles across the continent we have noted Bonneville's feat of taking wagons to Green river in 1832. Whitman succeeded in taking a cart as far as Fort Boise on Snake river where it was abandoned. Farnham saw it there in 1839.

The history of the Catholic missions in the Rocky mountains is little more than a record of the work of Father P. J. De Smet, S. J., one of the most interesting and noteworthy characters in the annals of the West. Father De Smet came to St. Louis from Belgium in 1820 and was engaged in the mission work in the lower country for several years. In 1829 he became connected with the University of St. Louis and in 1832 visited his home in Belgium for his health. After a sojourn of several years he returned to St. Louis in 1837. In the following year he commenced his career as a missionary among the Indians, taking up his residence among the Pottawatomies near Council Bluffs. Finally in response to the repeated calls of the Flathead Indians it was decided to send Father De Smet to that tribe. He accordingly set out in 1840 and thus commenced that famous series of journeys throughout the West which made his name well known on both sides of the Atlantic.

Father De Smet was a zealous and devout religious teacher, but he was far more. He was a careful and discriminating observer and a fluent and interesting writer. During all his journeys he kept up correspondence with friends in Europe. His letters were meant to be something more than friendly epistles and were doubtless intended for publication. They abound in descriptions of the country, its fauna, flora, the Indian tribes, anecdotes of wilderness life, and a multitude of cognate subjects. Altogether they form one of the most comprehensive descriptions that we possess of the West as it was in the days of the fur trade.

Father De Smet traveled extensively among the Western tribes. He was loved and respected by the Indians, and never suffered harm at their hands. Many are the entertaining incidents connected with the visits of the "Black Robe," and his figure was always a welcome one in the wigwam of the Indian. His principal labors were among the Flathead Indians, for whom he conceived a most sincere and paternal affection, and in whose territory he founded his first mission.

PART IV.

NOTABLE INCIDENTS AND CHARACTERS IN THE HISTORY OF THE FUR TRADE.

CHAPTER I.

"THE LOST TRAPPERS."

The Lost Trappers—The story of Ezekiel Williams as related by himself—The story as told by David H. Coyner—Comments.

IT would be extremely interesting to know the names of those forty "Americans and expert riflemen" who escorted the Mandan chief back to his nation in the summer of 1809. Some of them figured again and prominently in later events of this period, and doubtless there were others who became known in the annals of the West, but whose connection with this expedition has been forgotten. Under the quoted title of the present chapter will be narrated the adventure of a company who went up the river with the expedition of 1809. Their leader, and probably others, belonged to the Mandan escort. Their experiences were the text of one of the completest fabrications that was ever published under the guise of history—*The Lost Trappers,* by David H. Coyner, 1859. The central figure of the adventure, both in fact and fiction, was Ezekiel Williams, a pioneer of Cooper county, Missouri, who, according to all the evidence that has come to light, was a thoroughly respectable character. His name occurs frequently in the chronicles of the time, and never in any questionable relation. That he was *particeps criminis* in the wholesale fraud which Coyner perpetrated in his name, there is no reason to believe. His experiences were bad enough on the plain basis of fact, and required no fictitious embellishment to add to their interest.

In 1809 Williams went up the river with the Missouri Fur Company and remained there two years. In August, 1811, with nineteen others, all independent hunters except two who were in the employ of one of the party named Chaplain, he set out on a hunting expedition to the south. They left Lisa's fort "on the Missouri" and were assured by Lisa that he would maintain the post until their return. They traveled south for nearly two months, when they found themselves on the Arkansas river and remained there unmolested until the following spring. The Indians then became troublesome, "robbing and harassing the company in every quarter." In June the party, then on the head-waters of the Platte, concluded to separate into smaller bands. Eight or ten crossed the mountains to the westward, and as many more, including Williams and Chaplain, went south along the eastern base of the mountains until they again reached the Arkansas, where, through some means or other, they learned that Lisa's post on the Missouri had been broken up and that there was no use of their returning to that quarter.

Williams' party now separated again, four going to Santa Fe, while the rest, including Williams, Chaplain and his two men, and two Frenchmen, struck out into the mountains to hunt. They spread about in small parties, and while thus separated three of the men were killed, leaving only Williams, Chaplain, and one Parteau. The three survivors then sought protection among the Arapaho Indians, the very ones who had slain their companions. The chief told them that their only safety was to remain under his protection, which they did, "and passed a wretched winter filled with despair of ever being able to return home." In the spring Chaplain and Parteau desired to continue with the Indians, who assured them that they would certainly be killed if they attempted to return home; but Williams determined to get away or lose his life in the attempt. His comrades helped him to make a canoe, and having cached his furs, he bade his companions farewell and set out down the river March 1st, 1813. The parting was a gloomy one. Chaplain shook hands with Williams, while Parteau turned away and wept. A number of Indians witnessed the scene. Chaplain and Parteau told Williams just as he was departing that they should also try to get away in about three days. Each promised to notify the friends of the others if he should get back first, and thus they parted, never to see one another again.

Williams descended the Arkansas about four hundred miles, trapping beaver on the way, until his canoe was stopped by the shallow water. The June rise enabled him to start again, but on the 23rd of June he was captured by the Kansas Indians, who bound him fast and took possession of all his property, consisting of the furs he had caught along the river. The Indians kept him prisoner until August 15th, when they restored part of his furs and set him free. He arrived at Boone's Lick, his home, about September 1st. The Indian sub-agent at Fort Osage, G. C. Sibley, to whom Williams reported the theft of his furs, caused the Indians to restore them.[1]

Soon after his return home Williams went to St. Louis, and there saw Lisa, who related to him his misfortunes on the upper river, and predicted that Williams' companions were all killed if they had undertaken to return to the fort. In May, 1814, Williams, in company with Morris May, Braxton Cooper, and eighteen Frenchmen, called Phillebert's Company, set out for the mountains to bring in the furs cached there. They arrived safely at the Arapaho village, where they called a council of the chiefs and demanded to know what had become of Chaplain and Parteau. The Indians could give no satisfactory account of them except that, some time after Williams' departure, they had set out with eleven horses and their furs to try to reach the Missouri, and that two white men, supposed to be they, had been found by the Crows, dead.

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[1] See official report of Sibley to Gen. Clark, dated Nov. 30, 1813, which is entirely confirmatory of Williams' account.

Failing in his inquiries, Williams hired Le Claire (or Le Clerc) of Phillebert's Company, and with May and Cooper, uncached his furs and started home.[2] After descending the Arkansas about five hundred miles they were stopped by low water, and Williams was again compelled to cache his furs and return home without them. In the course of the following winter he received information that Le Clair had told of the cache of furs, and that a company under his pilotage had started to find it. Williams, with Joseph and William Cooper, brothers of Braxton, and all members of the noted pioneer family for whom Cooper county, Missouri, is named, made haste to forestall Le Clair in his scheme of robbery. They succeeded in reaching the furs first, and guarded the cache until spring, when they took advantage of high water and floated down to the settlements. It afterward came out that certain parties from St. Louis were back of Le Clair and his companions, and had promised them immunity even if they had to murder Williams to achieve their purpose. They hired a band of Indians to help them, but when the latter learned of the extreme business that they were called upon to do, they withdrew from their engagement and the whole scheme fell to pieces.

Such were the adventures of Ezekiel Williams which were made the basis of the romance of the "Lost Trappers." According to this work Williams was engaged by the United States to escort the Mandan chief back to his home. He set out on this mission April 25, 1807, with twenty men, himself included, traveling by land, west of the Missouri and far back from the stream. He reached the Mandans July 1. From this point the party, which included the

[2] Phillebert remained in the mountains. For further trace of him see page 497.

noted character, Edward Rose, wandered all over the Western country from the Missouri to the Arkansas. Misfortune pursued them. Rose deserted to live with the Crows; Hamilton died from sickness, and ten men were killed in various encounters with the Indians, until "Captain Williams saw his party" (originally only twenty strong) "reduced to ten." Naturally enough, in these untoward circumstances, "the spirits of the men drooped and their hearts became sad," but through it all the redoubtable Captain Williams "wore a serene and cheerful countenance," and forthwith proceeded to land his party into fresh disaster. One after another they fell victims to the Indians, until there finally remained only three, Captain Williams, James Workman and David Spencer. In this plight they agreed to separate, Williams with the intention (which he carried out) of returning home, and the other two of going to Santa Fe. The latter did not succeed in their purpose, but after wandering a long time among the mountains, fell in with a party of Spaniards on their way to California. They joined this party and spent the winter of 1808-9 in California, returning to Santa Fe in 1810, where they remained for fifteen years, and finally returned home with a caravan bound for the States.

In all of this ingenious creation it is apparent that the author, Coyner, was chiefly a coiner of lies. In the first part of the narrative there is not a semblance of truth, and the details of the story are themselves physically impossible. Bancroft, the historian of the West, has shown that the second part of the story, that of the adventure of Workman and Spencer, is also impossible, for no Americans had reached California over land at that early day. So crude a fabrication would not merit the notice here given it, were it not that high historical authority has commended it as most reliable data. Strange to say, Bancroft himself accepts it in the main and avers that Coyner tells his story "in a homely but truthful and direct way, which commands the reader's respect and confidence." Less remarkable is the endorsement of the book by Colonel Inman, the compiler of the *Old Santa Fe Trail* and the *Salt Lake Trail.* Other authors refer to it favorably, and its false and spurious character seems generally to have escaped detection.

CHAPTER II.

THE BATTLE OF PIERRE'S HOLE.

Pierre's Hole — Rendezvous of 1832 — The Grosventres — The Grosventre chief slain — The battle commences — The Blackfoot fort — Progress of the battle — Mistake of the interpreter — The siege raised — Indians escape during the night — Casualties — Affair in Jackson Hole — Ill fortune of the Indians — Godin murdered — The story of an Indian woman.

PIERRE'S Hole, as it was then called, or Teton Basin, its present name, is one of those valleys which are veritable oases in the desert of rugged mountains. Very few of these valleys exceed that of Pierre's Hole in beauty. It is overhung on the east by that noble range of mountains whose culminating peak is the Grand Teton. The valley extends in a direction from southeast to northwest. It is fully thirty miles long and from five to fifteen in breadth. It appears like a broad, flat prairie, almost destitute of trees except along its principal river and the various tributaries. These typical mountain streams descend mostly from the Teton range, where they are fed by perennial snows and almost daily summer rains. The course of these streams can be traced for great distances by the ribbons of verdure which cross the plain here and there and unite with a larger line of trees along the central stream. These riparian forests are more extensive than the observer from a distance would imagine. The more considerable cottonwood groves are often so filled with tangled growths of willows and creeping vines as to be almost impenetrable, and in many places it is a physical impossibility to get through them until the brush has been cut away.

In the summer of 1832 the Rocky Mountain and American Fur Companies had their rendezvous in the upper part of the valley of Pierre's Hole some twelve or fifteen miles from Teton Pass. With their accustomed alacrity of movement the managers of the Rocky Mountain Fur Company had excelled their rivals in reaching the rendezvous with their annual supplies. William L. Sublette arrived there with a party of about sixty men on the 6th of July. Wyeth was with him and so were the remnants of Blackwell and Gant's parties of the previous year whom Sublette had found on Laramie river. Vanderburgh and Drips, of the American Fur Company, were also present. Fontenelle, who was coming from Fort Union with supplies, was still far behind in the Bighorn valley. Captain Bonneville, likewise headed in the same direction, was still in the valley of the Platte.

In the valley of Pierre's Hole were also many hundreds of Indians, mostly of the Flathead and Nez Perce tribes. The Grosventres, ever hostile to the whites, were this year particularly troublesome around the headwaters of the Snake and Green rivers. Although a post had been built in the Blackfoot country scarcely a year before—Fort Piegan, at the mouth of the Marias — this fact seems not at all to have tempered the ferocity of the tribe. They were at this time returning home from a visit to their kindred, the Arapahoes. Sublette had had a sharp brush with them on the way to rendezvous, and Fitzpatrick, who had gone on ahead, was unhorsed and forced to secrete himself in the mountains, and wandered for five days without food, reaching the rendezvous more dead than alive.

When the business of the rendezvous was nearly completed, a party of trappers under Milton G. Sublette set out, July 17th, in the direction of the main Snake river toward the southeast. Wyeth embraced this opportunity to secure a good escort out of the Blackfoot country for the remnant of his party who had decided to continue on to the Pacific. The joint party proceeded but a short distance, six or eight miles, and encamped for the night. Just as they were setting out next morning they discovered a party of horsemen approaching. They were in doubt for a time whether it was white or Indian, but they soon found that it was a band of Grosventres. They were approaching in two parties, and numbered apparently about a hundred and fifty men. According to Leonard they carried a British flag which they had captured from a party of Hudson Bay trappers, whom they had lately defeated. Irving says that the Indians discovered the whites first, and came down into the valley with the most vociferous demonstrations. John B. Wyeth says that the trappers could not at first tell whether they were buffalo, white men or Indians. Finally, by the aid of Wyeth's glass, they discovered them to be Blackfeet, and Milton Sublette at once sent two men to the rendezvous for assistance.[1]

In the meantime a tragedy of revenge had been enacting on the plain. The Blackfeet, discovering that the force before them was larger than they had supposed, made signs of peace, displaying, it is said, a white flag. But such was their general reputation for perfidy that no confidence was placed in their friendly advances. There were, moreover, in the white camp two men who cherished inextinguishable hatred toward the Blackfeet. One of these was Antoine Godin, whose father had been murdered by these Indians on Godin creek. The other was a Flathead chief whose nation had suffered untold wrongs from the tribe. These two men it was who advanced to meet the overtures of peace from the other side. A Blackfoot chief came forward to meet them. By a preconcerted arrangement between Antoine and the Flathead, the latter shot the Blackfoot dead at the instant when Antoine grasped his hand in friendship. Seizing the chief's scarlet robe, Antoine and his companion beat a hasty, though safe, retreat. "This was Joab with a vengeance!" remarks young Wyeth. "Art thou in health, my brother?"

The Indians now withdrew into some timber near by, surrounded by a copse of willows, and immediately intrenched themselves by digging holes in the ground, and building a breastwork of timber in front of their rifle pits. This work was mostly done by the women, the Indians maintaining a skirmish line in front of the fort. While the express was gone to the rendezvous for reinforcements, Milton Sublette's trappers held the Indians within the wood, and Wyeth fortified his own camp, where he ordered his men to remain.

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[1] For an explanation of the confusion of names, Blackfeet and Grosventre, see Part V., Chapter IX.

William L. Sublette and Robert Campbell, upon receipt of the news of attack, immediately left the rendezvous and in short order arrived on the field with a large force of whites and Indians. Sublette assumed direction of the battle. He forbade both Wyeth's men and his own raw recruits to engage in the fight, and used only the seasoned trappers and the Indians. Wyeth himself, however, was present in the engagement part of the time. The Blackfeet, when they saw the overwhelming force with which they had to reckon, withdrew within their entrenchments, evidently determined to sell their lives dearly.

The whites and allied Indians promptly commenced the attack by random firing into the thicket. This accomplished nothing, but gave the Blackfeet a chance to do some effective work in return. It was apparent that other measures would have to be adopted to dislodge them, and Sublette proposed to storm the breastworks. His men thought it too dangerous, but Sublette insisted. About thirty of the whites and as many Indians joined him, and together they entered the willow thickets. Pushing their way cautiously through the tangled copses, Sublette, Campbell, and Sinclair of Arkansas led the besiegers toward the Indian fort. Sublette and Campbell and doubtless others had made their wills to each other in anticipation of the consequences that might ensue. After working their way on hands and knees through the dense line of willows they came to more open ground, and then saw the rude fortification of the besieged. As they emerged into this open space they were more exposed to the fire of the Blackfeet. Sinclair was killed on the spot and Sublette was severely wounded. In the meanwhile Wyeth with some Indians had gained nearly the opposite side of the fort, and one Indian near him was killed by a chance shot from Sublette's party. The besieged evidently suffered but little at this time, for they were well protected, although completely overmatched in numbers.

The attack continued for the greater part of the day without any substantial progress, owing to the secure position of the enemy and the evident reluctance of the attackers to storm it. Finally Sublette decided to burn them out, although much against the wish of the friendly Indians, who wanted to plunder the fort. A train of wood was laid and was about to be ignited, when an incident occurred which brought immediate relief to the beleaguered garrison. One of the friendly Indians who understood the Blackfoot language held some conversation with the besieged during the fight. They now told him that they knew that the whites could kill them, but that they had six or eight hundred warriors who would soon arrive and who would give them all the fighting they wanted. In the process of interpretation the Blackfoot was made to say that this force was then actually attacking the main rendezvous. Such an attack would have been disastrous in the absence of the fighting force, and the whites, without waiting to verify the news, hastened off pellmell. Before the mistake was discovered it was too late to resume the attack. On the following morning the Blackfoot fort was found abandoned.

The casualties in this fight were, on the side of the whites, five killed, among whom was the partisan Sinclair, and six wounded, of whom William L. Sublette was one. The allied Indians lost seven killed and six wounded. The loss of the Blackfeet was never fully known. They left nine dead warriors in the fort together with twenty-five horses and nearly all their baggage. Irving says that the

Blackfeet admitted to have lost twenty-six warriors. Evidently the blunder of the interpreter saved the band from annihilation. The survivors escaped during the night and effected a junction with the larger band.

The battle of Pierre's Hole was not without its important sequels. On the 25th of July, seven men of Wyeth's party, together with Alfred K. Stephens and four men, the joint party including a Mr. More of Boston, a Mr. Foy of Mississippi, and two grandsons of Daniel Boone, set out from the rendezvous to return East. They had intended to accompany William L. Sublette, but the latter's departure had been postponed about ten days on account of his wound. Impatient of delay, these men set out to the eastward, and on the following day they were attacked in Jackson Hole by a band of some twenty Blackfeet. More and Foy were killed and Stephens was wounded. He, with the rest of the party, returned to the rendezvous, where he lingered until the 30th of July, when he died, just after starting for St. Louis in company with W. L. Sublette. His horses and traps were sold the same day, and his beaver fur was taken to St. Louis.[2]

Sublette with his party of about sixty men and the returns of the past year left rendezvous on the 30th of July. The day after crossing Snake river, August 4th, they passed the large band of Blackfeet of whom they had been told by the Indian at the battle of Pierre's Hole. These Indians had been hovering in the vicinity of the camps of Fontenelle and Bonneville, but had not ventured to attack. In like manner their recent experience in Pierre's Hole made them hesitate about attacking Sublette's party, and he was suffered to pass unmolested. This band of Indians finally left the country by the way of the Wind River valley, where they were attacked and routed by some Crow Indians with a loss of forty killed. The remainder were scattered like fugitives throughout the Crow country.

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[2] There is now in possession of M. L. Gray, of St. Louis, a receipt by Sam Merry, administrator of the Stephen estate, for the proceeds of this sale and for the beaver fur.

It will be remembered that it was Antoine Godin who killed the Blackfoot chief at Pierre's Hole in revenge for the death of his father. But the account was not yet considered closed — at least on the part of the Blackfeet. At some time between September 1834 and September 1835, the exact date unknown, a party of Blackfeet appeared on the opposite bank of the Snake from Fort Hall. They were led by a desperado named Bird,[3] a former employe of the Hudson Bay Company, who, having been made a prisoner by the Blackfeet, in a skirmish with some of that tribe, had remained with them and had become an influential chieftain. From the opposite side of the river Bird requested Godin to come across and buy their furs. Godin complied, not suspecting treachery. He sat down to smoke with the company, when Bird signaled to some Indians, who shot him in the back. While he was yet alive, Bird tore his scalp off and cut the letters "N. J. W.," Wyeth's initials, on his forehead. Thus ended the tragedy of Pierre's Hole.

Irving relates an incident which, whether true or not, has passed into the tradition of the battle. In their advance upon the Blackfoot redoubt some of the trappers saw an Indian woman leaning against a tree. Surprised that she should thus indifferently expose herself to certain death, they looked for the cause and found that she was standing beside the corpse of her dead warrior. The trappers would have saved her, but no sooner did the Indian allies see her than they fell upon and slew her.[4]

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[3] "A half Indian and treacherous, very dangerous man, who had great influence among the Blackfeet. He had formerly been in the service of the American Fur Company, had then gone over to the Hudson Bay Company, and had cheated both. He was a tall, strong man, with a brownish complexion, thick, black hair, spoke the language of the Blackfeet perfectly, and lived constantly among them. At present he was not in the service of either company, but lived by catching beaver and hunting on his own account." Maximilian, Prince of Wied; *Travels in North America*, p. 267.

[4] Our authorities for the battle of Pierre's Hole are numerous and

reliable. Irving is the best, for he evidently digested his account from information derived from all available sources. The first published account is by an eye-witness and the principal actor in the battle, William L. Sublette. It is a letter to Ashley, written at Lexington, Mo., Sept. 21, 1832, while the writer was en route home. It may be seen in the old *Missouri Republican* of October 16, 1832, which republished it from the "last *Beacon.*" There are also three other accounts by eye-witnesses extant—that of the elder Wyeth in his journal, and one by John B. Wyeth in his account of the expedition, and a third by A. W. Ferris.

Ferris' account, which is much less satisfactory than that of Sublette, nevertheless contributes a few items of interest. His record of the number killed was 3 whites, 5 friendly Indians, and 9 Blackfeet. There were many wounded on both sides, and 24 dead horses were found within the fort. Irving's story of the Indian woman is confirmed in the following paragraph: "Our Indians followed the route of the fugitives for several miles, and found their baggage which they had concealed in divers places, as well as the bodies of 5 more Indians, and two young women who were yet unhurt, though their heartless captors sent them to the shades in pursuit of their relations without the least remorse."

CHAPTER III.

THE DEATH OF HENRY VANDERBURGH.

Henry Vanderburgh — Competition in the mountain trade — Vanderburgh and Drips pursue Fitzpatrick and Bridger — Neck to neck game — Drips finally gives up — Starts up the Jefferson — Fitzpatrick and Bridger run onto Vanderburgh — Parties separate — Vanderburgh passes Alder Gulch — Alarm of Indians on the Stinkingwater — Reconnoitering party ambushed — Vanderburgh slain — Party moves to Beaverhead — Vanderburgh and Pillon buried — Meeting with Drips — Drips crosses the Divide to Snake river — Adventure of Bridger — Bridger wounded — The Loretto episode — Arrowhead extracted from Bridger's shoulder.

THE fate of this unfortunate leader was a direct result of the extreme rivalry which prevailed among the fur companies of the mountains in 1832. Henry Vanderburgh, "one of the principal clerks attached to the American Fur Company," was an able, enterprising and indefatigable leader. He was the man upon whom the conduct of the mountain expeditions had hitherto mainly devolved, when Kenneth McKenzie found that the affairs at Fort Union would not give him the time to conduct them in person. With Vanderburgh were associated for a while Andrew Drips and Lucien Fontenelle, who, after Vanderburgh's death, carried on their operations from their post at Bellevue on the Missouri instead of from Fort Union. Vanderburgh had seen considerable service. Ten years before this, he was in the Missouri Fur Company. He was given the nominal rank of Captain in the affair of the Aricara villages in 1823, and seems always to have borne himself with the air and quality of a leader.

In 1832 the competition in trade in the mountains was at its height. The agents of the American Fur Company were still comparative strangers in the Rocky mountains, and were not yet a match for the experienced leaders of the Rocky Mountain Fur Company. Fitzpatrick and Bridger had fixed upon the headwaters of the Missouri as the field for their fall hunt. Vanderburgh and Drips had for some time been pursuing what must be pronounced a most exasperating, if not unprincipled, course. Being less familiar than their rivals with the good trapping country, their policy was to keep close upon the trail of the latter and thus make these redoubtable partisans their unwilling guides to the rich beaver country. The Rocky Mountain Fur Company had repeatedly tried to shake them off, and at the rendezvous in Pierre's Hole had proposed to divide the territory with them. The proposition was not accepted, but as the American Fur Company supplies had not arrived in time for the rendezvous, and as there was no immediate prospect of their arrival, Fitzpatrick and Bridger thought to get away before their persistent rivals should receive their equipment.

In the meantime Vanderburgh and Drips started in all haste for Green river to find out what had become of Fontenelle, who was to bring their supplies.. They left Pierre's Hole August 2nd, and reached Green river August 8th, where they found Fontenelle in camp about four miles above Captain Bonneville. Four days were spent here transacting the necessary business of the annual rendezvous, when Fontenelle started with the returns of the year for Fort Union, and Vanderburgh and Drips set out to overtake Fitzpatrick and Bridger, whom they believed to be somewhere on the headwaters of the Missouri.

When the party reached Pierre's Hole on their return, W. A. Ferris was detached to make a circuit to the head of Salmon river to find the Flathead Indians, whence he was to rejoin his comrades in the valley of the Big Hole river, the principal tributary of Jefferson fork of the Missouri. In the meanwhile the two leaders would beat up the country on the sources of the Jefferson. They proceeded down that stream, and at Horse Prairie, the valley of a small tributary of the Jefferson, they cached such of their equipment as would encumber them in their pursuit of Fitzpatrick and Bridger. They had found the fresh trail of their rivals and knew that they could not be far away. Ferris rejoined them from the Flatheads on the 1st of September, and ten days later they succeeded in overtaking the party of the Rocky Mountain Fur Company. The records of the journey state that upon this day a man named Miller died in camp from a wound received in the battle of Pierre's Hole the previous July.

Fitzpatrick and Bridger were completely exasperated at finding themselves persistently followed by the partisans of the American Fur Company, and they resolved to lead them a chase which they would remember. In this they succeeded only too well. On the 17th of September they set out to the north down the valley of the Jefferson apparently for the Three Forks of the Missouri. Drips with a portion of his party followed hard after them, while Vanderburgh crossed over to the Madison to trap along the course of that stream. How far the rival parties pursued their course north is uncertain, but far enough for Drips to see that he was being made a dupe at his own game; for he had been led quite beyond the good trapping country. He accordingly resolved to give up the chase and turn back to the south. The parties separated about the 1st of October at the Three Forks, Drips starting up the Jefferson and Fitzpatrick and Bridger up the Gallatin. The latter party, after ascending the Gallatin for some distance, crossed over to the Madison, October 6th, where they quite unexpectedly came upon Vanderburgh and his party. It seemed impossible to keep out of the way of their resourceful opponents.

But this was the last encounter of the opposing parties during the fall hunt of 1832. On the 11th of October the Rocky Mountain Fur Company started off up the Madison to trap the sources of that stream. Vanderburgh did not move until October 12, when he went down the Madison about fifteen miles. The next day he crossed over in a northwest direction eighteen miles and encamped on a little stream, one of the sources of the Jefferson. This was probably Alder creek, a stream destined to world-wide fame in later years as the location of the famous placer of Alder Gulch; and the party most likely tramped over ground which was glistening with gold beneath their feet.

On the morning of the 14th the party moved down the stream to its junction with the Stinkingwater river, a tributary of the Jefferson to which Lewis and Clark gave the name Philanthropy. Here they became aware of the presence of Indians in the neighborhood. Ferris and a few others went out to reconnoiter and their worst fears were soon confirmed by finding the remains of a buffalo just butchered, from which the Indians had evidently fled on the approach of the whites. This discovery was at once reported to Vanderburgh. As the trappers could not be persuaded to work when danger was imminent, Vanderburgh and six others left the main party in camp and set out up the river where the Indians were supposed to be, determined to ascertain what the situation actually was. After traveling about three miles they found a fire still burning, a buffalo just killed, and the fresh tracks of the Indians. The small number of these tracks, and the fact that buffalo were grazing all about quite unalarmed, made them think that there could not be more than seven or eight Indians at most.

The little party therefore pushed on another three miles toward the only dense bunch of timber that there was in the vicinity. Here it was felt certain that the Indians must be, for anywhere else they would be in sight unless they had fled to the mountains. With a sense of possible danger they approached the grove, watching with the utmost care for any evidence of life. At this point they came to an old channel of the river through which the water flowed in flood time, but which now interposed no greater obstacle than a small but deep ditch which a horse could leap over. They crossed the gully, but scarcely had they reached the other side when a volley from twenty or more firearms disclosed the presence of a body of Indians concealed along the banks, apparently to the number of about a hundred. Three of the party of hunters turned instantly and fled. Vanderburgh's horse was shot under him, but he calmly disengaged himself, aimed his gun at his assailants and called out to his men, "Boys, don't run." But there was no possibility of making a stand. Ferris and a Mr. R. C. Nelson turned their horses and vaulted the ditch, Ferris receiving at the same instant a severe wound in the left shoulder. Another man, Alexis Pillon, a French voyageur, was thrown from his horse, which broke away riderless toward camp. Pillon, thus left to the mercy of the savages, was almost instantly slain. Vanderburgh was thus left alone without hope of succor. One of his men, Nelson, who had jumped the ditch with Ferris, was in despair at his leader's peril, and was about to turn back, when his horse received two shots in the neck and he was compelled to flee to save his own life. As the Indians approached Vanderburgh he killed the nearest one with a shot from his rifle, and was raising his pistol to fire again when he received a volley in the back, and fell a victim to his savage foes.

When the survivors returned to camp there was the greatest consternation and most of the party were for resorting to instant flight. But wiser counsels prevailed, and they withdrew to a point of timber on the river side, where they fortified themselves and passed a sleepless night. The next morning it was proposed to go back and bury their dead companions, but none of the party would undertake it. They accordingly packed up and started for the caches at Horse Prairie. Upon rounding the point of a mountain they came in sight of the Beaver Head, a famous land-mark on the Jefferson river, now known as the Point of Rocks, some fifteen miles below Dillon, Mont. A large smoke was rising there, and fearing the presence of another party of Indians, they turned directly toward the Jefferson and made for a grove of cottonwoods, which they reached after a march of fifteen miles. Here another restless night was spent in a fortified camp.

Next day a reconnoitering party found to their great relief that the Indians at Beaver Head were Flatheads and Pend d' Oreilles, always firm friends of the whites, and the whole party at once moved to join them. On the 17th of October a burial party was sent back to the scene of the late attack. They found and buried Pillon, but could not find Vanderburgh. Ferris then sent some Flathead Indians to the place under a promise of a reward if they could discover the remains of the lamented leader. They succeeded in finding his bones, which the Indians had stripped of the flesh and thrown into the river. They buried these on the margin of the stream. The Indians had, however, carried away the arms of the " White Chief," as they called him, and these were later exhibited as trophies of victory at Fort McKenzie on the Missouri.

The whole affair was one of the most lamentable tragedies that ever occurred in the mountains, for the principal victim was a man of chivalrous character, high standing, and universally beloved by those who knew him. Its most regrettable feature is the fact that it grew out of a bitter and unreasonable commercial strife in which Vanderburgh was a victim of his own zeal.

After a short stay at Beaver Head the party pushed on to the caches at Horse Prairie, where they found Drips, October 21, and acquainted him with the sad fate which had befallen his able associate.[1] The united parties left Horse Prairie on the 24th for Snake river.

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[1] The date of Vanderburgh's death, October 14, 1832, is confirmed by the records of the American Fur Company:

" Dans ma dernière j'ai omis de vous informer qu'un exprès venant de la Roche Jaune nous a apporté la facheuse nouvelle que M. Vanderburgh a été tué par les Pieds-Noirs le 14 Octobre dernier sur une des trois fourches du Missouri appellée le Jefferson." Cet accident nous causera un grand déficit dans cet équipement. La chasse fut

If Fitzpatrick and Bridger had led Vanderburgh to his death, they did not wholly escape themselves, although their great experience of Indian wiles saved them from ambuscade or surprise. One day they saw a body of Blackfeet in the open plain, though near some rocks which could be resorted to in case of need. They made pacific overtures, which were reciprocated by the whites. A few men advanced from each party. A circle was formed and the pipe of peace was smoked. It is related by Irving that while this ceremony was going on, a young Mexican named Loretto, a free trapper accompanying Bridger's band who had previously ransomed from the Crows a beautiful Blackfoot girl, and had made her his wife, was then present looking on. The girl recognized her brother among the Indians. Instantly leaving her infant with Loretto she rushed into her brother's arms and was received with the greatest warmth and affection.

Bridger now rode forward to where the peace ceremonies were enacting. His rifle lay across his saddle. The Blackfoot chief came forward to meet him. Through some apparent distrust Bridger cocked his piece as if about to fire. The chief seized the barrel and pushed it downward so that its contents were discharged into the ground. This precipitated a melee. Bridger received two arrow shots in his back, and the chief felled him to the earth with a blow from the gun which he had wrenched from Bridger's hand. The chief then leaped into Bridger's saddle, and the whole party made for the cover of the rocks, where a desultory fire was kept up for some time.

The Indian girl had been carried along with her people, and in spite of her pitiful entreaties, was not allowed to return. Loretto, witnessing her grief, seized the child and

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aussitôt interrompu et le parti retraversa la montagne pour rejoindre M. Dripps et hiberner sur la rivière au Serpent. Il est à regretter que M. Fontenelle fut absent à cet époque." Chouteau to Astor, March 30, 1833. So also *Missouri Republican*, March 26th, 1833, and Fort Pierre Journal, Jan. 9th, 1833. For sketch of Vanderburgh's life see p. 392.

ran to her, greatly to the amazement of the Indians. He was cautioned to depart if he wanted to save his life, and at his wife's urgent insistence he did so. Some time afterward he closed his account with the Rocky Mountain Fur Company and rejoined his wife among her own people. It is said that he was later employed as an interpreter at the fort below the falls of the Missouri.

One of the arrowheads which Bridger received in his back on this occasion remained there for nearly three years, or until the middle of August, 1835. At that time Dr. Marcus Whitman was at the rendezvous on Green river, en route to Oregon. Bridger was also there and Dr. Whitman extracted the arrow from his back. The operation was a difficult one "because the arrow was hooked at the point by striking a large bone, and a cartilaginous substance had grown around it. The doctor pursued the operation with great self-possession and perseverance; and his patient manifested equal firmness. The Indians looked on meanwhile with countenances indicating wonder, and in their own peculiar manner expressed great astonishment when it was extracted." The arrow was of iron and about three inches long.

CHAPTER IV.

THE BATTLE OF FORT McKENZIE.

The building of a fort in the Blackfoot country — Treaty of peace between the Blackfeet and the Assiniboines — Unexpected attack by the Assiniboines — Battle continues all day — Assiniboines driven off — Piegan valor.

NO bolder or more courageous measure was ever accomplished in the history of the fur trade than the establishment of a trading post by the American Fur Company in the country of the Blackfeet. The implacable hostility of these Indians to the whites had been in evidence since the first appearance of white men among them. The expulsion of the traders from the headwaters of the Missouri in 1810 and the massacre of Jones and Immel and several of their followers in 1823 were still fresh in the minds of many then living. It was well known that the attitude of these people had not changed and that the trader who should venture into their territory did so at the imminent peril of his life.

The Blackfeet and Assiniboines were hostile to each other, and a preliminary step in the establishment of a post in the Blackfoot country was an attempt on the part of McKenzie at Fort Union to establish peace between these two tribes. This was accomplished in 1831. James Kipp built Fort Piegan at the mouth of the Marias in the fall of that year, and D. D. Mitchell built Fort McKenzie a few miles above, when Fort Piegan was abandoned the following year. Everything went well until the summer of 1833, when the Assiniboines, becoming tired of the peace, and perhaps urged on by the British traders, concluded to attack the fort.

During the latter part of the month of August, 1833, the Indians had mostly withdrawn from the vicinity of Fort McKenzie, but there were still a few tents of Piegans encamped close to the fort. They had been singing and drinking most of the night and by morning had fallen into a state of stupid lethargic slumber from which it was not easy to arouse them. While in this condition they were attacked at daybreak on the morning of August 28, by some six hundred Assiniboines and Crees. This was before the inmates of the fort had arisen, and their first intimation of trouble came from Doucette, one of the engagés, who rushed into the room where Prince Maximilian and Mr. Mitchell were, and called out: "*Levez vous, il nous faut battre.*"

The attack was so sudden and unexpected that considerable damage had been done before any effective resistance was offered. The Assiniboines first fell upon the Piegan camp, tore their tents to pieces, killed several of the Indians, and threw the remainder into a panic. The employes of the fort made haste to let in the friendly Indians, but the women, by a foolish endeavor to save their property, encumbered themselves with saddles, etc., blocked the door of the fort, and several of them were massacred before they could get in. As fast as the Piegans got inside they mounted the palisades and opened fire. Many of the engagés had imprudently sold their ammunition to the Indians, and were helpless until a supply could be issued to them.

In the meanwhile it transpired that the attack had been directed against the Blackfeet and not against the whites. Mr. Mitchell accordingly ordered his men to stop firing. The Blackfeet within the fort, however, could not be restrained, and even Doucette and Loretto persisted in firing. This Loretto, who is the same one that was with Bridger when he was wounded on Jefferson Fork, now went outside the fort and at close range slew the nephew of the principal chief of the Assiniboines. The Assiniboines then withdrew beyond effective range of the fort.

A strange scene it must have been within the fort during this time. Happily we have two effective pictures of it, one from the pen of Maximilian and the other from the hand of his artist, Bodmer. "While all this was passing," says the Prince, "the court yards of the fort presented a very strange scene. A number of wounded men, women and children were laid or placed against the walls; others, in their deplorable condition, were pulled about by their relatives amid tears and lamentations. The White Buffalo, whom I have mentioned, and who had received a wound at the back of his head, was carried about in this manner, amid singing, howling, and crying. They rattled the schischikue in his ears, that the evil spirit might not overcome him, and gave him brandy to drink. He himself, though stupefied, sung without intermission and would not give himself up to the evil spirit. Otsequa-Stomik, an old man of our acquaintance, was wounded in the knee by a ball which a woman cut out with a pen knife, during which operation he did not betray the least symptom of pain. Natah-Otanee, a handsome young man with whom we became acquainted on our visit to Kutonapi, was suffering dreadfully from severe wounds. Several Indians, especially young women, were likewise wounded. We endeavored to assist the wounded, and Mr. Mitchell distributed balsam and linen for bandages; but very little could be done; for instead of suffering the wounded, who were exhausted by the loss of blood, to take some rest, their relatives continually pulled them about. sounded large bells, and rattled their medicine or amulets, among which were the bear's paws which the White Buffalo wore on his breast. Only a spectator of this extraordinary scene could form any idea of the confusion and noise, which was increased by the loud report of the musketry, the moving backwards and forwards of the people carrying powder and ball, and the tumult occasioned by above twenty horses shut up in the fort." We imagine that the royal seeker for knowledge, who had forsaken the luxury of courts for the deprivations of the wilderness, felt that he was now getting more than he had bargained for.

From the beginning of the engagement the Blackfeet had reproached the whites for not coming out of the fort to fight the enemy, although there was no occasion to do so, for the attack was not directed against the whites. But the Blackfeet did not see it in that light, and were evidently getting the idea that the whites were not brave. This would not do, and accordingly Mr. Mitchell with some of his best men sallied out for the bluffs to which the Assiniboines had retreated. Early in the engagement runners had been dispatched to the Piegan camp ten miles away, for assistance, and parties were now beginning to arrive from that direction. "They came galloping in groups of from three to twenty together," says Maximilian, "their horses covered with foam, and they themselves in their finest apparel, with all kinds of ornaments and arms, bows and quivers on their backs, guns in their hands, furnished with their medicines, with feathers on their heads; some had splendid crowns of black and white eagle feathers, and a large hood of feathers hanging down behind, sitting on fine panther skins lined with red; the upper part of their bodies partly naked, with a long strip of wolf skin thrown across the shoulder, and carrying shields adorned with feathers and pieces of colored cloth. A truly original sight!"

The expedition of Mr. Mitchell and his followers to the bluffs had the effect of completely reinstating the whites in the confidence of the Blackfeet. They were always in advance, and Mr. Mitchell was finally compelled to taunt the Blackfeet themselves with cowardice. They certainly behaved with far less spirit than their enemies.

On the bluffs between the Missouri and the valley of the Marias the battle was continued for some time in a wild and desultory fashion. The Assiniboines were finally driven back across the Marias and here Mr. Mitchell's horse was shot under him, and he himself was slightly wounded. After dinner, Doucette, De Champ, and Berger rode over to the valley of the Marias, which was still occupied by the Assiniboines, and again came in contact with the enemy. Some Blackfeet who were with them came back boasting of their great exploits. The final result was that the Assiniboines, who had expended all their ammunition, retreated toward the Bear Paw mountains during the night.

The losses on the part of the Blackfeet occurred mostly in the first onset and fell principally upon the noncombatants. Culbertson says that "during the day we lost seven killed and twenty wounded. It is impossible to tell how many of the enemy were killed, but their loss must have been greater than ours, as they had little ammunition, and at last none."

The result of this affair was to nullify the treaty of peace between the Blackfeet and the Assiniboines. It also showed that, as between the Piegan band of the Blackfeet and the Assiniboines, the latter were the better fighters. The whites were a good deal astonished at the feeble efforts of their allies and could with difficulty see anything to justify the terrible reputation of the Blackfeet. On the other hand, the Blackfeet estimate of the prowess of the whites was greatly exalted and the situation at Fort McKenzie was materially improved.

CHAPTER V.

SMUGGLING LIQUOR UP THE MISSOURI.

Steamboat trip of American Fur Company, 1843 — Audubon on board — Arrival at Bellevue — Boat stopped by soldiers — Audubon visits Captain Burgwin — Inspection of the boat — Everything satisfactory — Voyage of 1844 — Liquor casks put inside the flour barrels — Barrels rolled off at Bellevue — Inspector finds nothing — Barrels rolled on after dark — Boat leaves before daylight — Suspicions of agent aroused — Discovers the fraud — Serious complications.

THE annual outfit of the American Fur Company for the Upper Missouri for 1843 was sent up in the steamboat *Omega,* Captain Joseph A. Sire master, and Captain Joseph La Barge pilot. The boat carried as passenger the celebrated naturalist, Audubon, who was ascending the river with a small company in the interests of his scientific pursuits. There was on board the usual amount of liquor, which was gotten safely past Fort Leavenworth. The point of greatest danger was at that time Bellevue. It happened, however, on the present occasion that the agent was absent from the post when the boat arrived and accordingly there was no inspection. Elated at this unexpected good fortune Captain Sire lost no time in putting off the freight destined for this point and in getting on his way. He pursued his voyage until nine o'clock that evening, and doubtless felicitated himself that he was out of danger. But it appears that the agent had delegated the function of inspector during his absence to the commander of the United States troops in the vicinity. The boat left her mooring at daylight next morning, but had scarcely gotten under way when a couple of rifle shots were fired across her bow. She brought to at once and made for the shore.

There they found a lieutenant in charge of a few dragoons who had come from the camp four miles distant. The young officer came on board and presented to Captain Sire a polite note from Captain Burgwin, who commanded the detachment of troops, stating that his orders required him to inspect the boat before letting her proceed.

This was like a dash of cold water on the buoyant spirits of Captain Sire and none the less so to Audubon, to whom, as well as to the company, the loss of the liquid portion of the cargo would have been irreparable. The naturalist had a permit from the government to carry with him a quantity of liquor for the use of himself and party, and upon showing his credentials to the young officer he was, to use his own words, "immediately settled comfortably." But in the moment of his good fortune he did not forget his companions who were not yet "settled comfortably." He understood that time was required for the crew to prepare for the approaching function, and he could at least help to secure this time by delaying inspection as long as possible. He accordingly expressed a desire to visit the camp, and the lieutenant detailed a dragoon to accompany him. The great naturalist rode four miles to camp to call upon an obscure army officer whom he knew he could see in a short time by waiting at the boat. The officer was overwhelmed at the honor of the visit, and when Audubon offered to present his credentials he politely and gallantly replied that his name was too well known throughout the United States to require any letters. Audubon says of the occasion: "I was on excellent and friendly terms in less time than it has taken me to write this account of our meeting." Between his entertaining conversation and the shooting of some birds he contrived to detain the Captain for a good two hours before they returned to the boat.

The time had not been wasted by Captain Sire and his loyal crew. The shallow hold of the steamboat of those days was divided lengthwise into two compartments by a partition or bulkhead running the full length of the boat. A narrow-gauge tramway extended down each side of the hold its entire length, the two sides connecting with each other by a curve which passed under the hatchway in the forecastle. Small cars received the cargo let down through the hatchway, and carried it to its place in the hold or brought it out again when the boat was being unloaded. A car could pass from the stern of the boat on one side of the hold around the curve in the bow and to the stern of the boat on the other side. There being no windows in the hold, everything was buried in blackness a few feet from the hatchway. Workmen were lighted in their labors by means of candles.

During the absence of Audubon the crew had loaded all the liquor upon the cars, and had run them down one side of the hold far enough from the hatchway to be entirely concealed in the darkness. They were carefully instructed in the part they had to play in the approaching comedy, and very likely were put through a preliminary rehearsal or two.

When Captain Burgwin arrived in Audubon's company he was received most hospitably and treated to a luncheon, in which was included, as a matter of course, a generous portion from the private store embraced in Audubon's "credentials." By this time the young Captain was in most excellent temper toward his hosts, and was quite disposed to forego the inspection altogether. But the virtuous Sire would not have it so. "I insisted, as it were," says the worthy navigator in his log of May 10th, "that he make the strictest possible search, but upon the condition that he would do the same with the other traders." [1]

[1] Log of steamboat *Omega*, May 10, 1843.—Nous venons très bien jusqu'aux côtes à Hart où, à sept heures, nous sommes sommés, par un officier de dragoons de mettre à terre. Je reçois une note polie du Capitaine Burgwin m'informant que son devoir l'oblige de faire visiter le bateau. Aussitôt nous nous mettons à l'ouvrage, et pendant ce temps M. Audubon va faire une visite au Capitaine. Ils reviennent ensemble deux heures après. Je force en quelque sorte l'officier à faire une recherche aussi stricte que possible, mais à la condition qu'il en sera de même avec les autres traiteurs."

A proposition so eminently fair was at once agreed to by the inspector, whose mellow faculties were now in a most accommodating condition. The shrewd steamboat master, who never forgot to be sober when his company's interests were at stake, escorted the officer down the hatchway, and together they groped their way along the hold by the light of a not too brilliant candle. It may be imagined with what zeal the scrupulous Captain thrust the ineffectual flame into every nook and corner, and even insisted that the inspector move a box or a bale now and then to assure himself that everything was all right.

Arrived at the foot of the hold they passed through an opening in the partition and started back on the other side. The officer was doubtless too much absorbed with the effects of his recent collation, to notice the glimmer of light under the hatchway at the other end of the boat, where a miniature train with its suspicious cargo was creeping stealthily around the curve and disappearing toward the side which they had just left. The party finished their inspection and everything was found quite as it should be. With many protestations of good will the clever hosts and their delighted guest parted company and the good Captain Sire went on his way rejoicing. But woe to the luckless craft of some rival trader which should happen along with no Audubon in the cabin and no tramway in the hold!

In the year following that of the incident just related, Captains Sire and La Barge were in charge of the company's annual boat, this year the *Nimrod* The same agent, a Mr. Miller, still held the reins of authority at Bellevue. He was an ex-Methodist minister, and as zealous in suppressing the liquor traffic among the Indians as he had ever been in the regular practice of his profession. It was his boast that no liquor could pass his agency. He rummaged every boat from stem to stern, broke open the packages, overturned the piles of merchandise, and with a long, slender pointed rod pierced the bales of blankets and clothing, lest kegs of alcohol might be rolled up within. The persistent clergyman put the experienced agents of the company to their wit's ends, and it was much as ever that they succeeded in eluding his scrutiny.

The urgency of the problem, however, produced its own solution. Captain Sire had the alcohol all packed inside barrels of flour. But he knew that even this device would alone not be enough, for the energetic agent would very likely have the barrels burst open. The Captain therefore had them all marked as if consigned to Peter A. Sarpy, the company's agent at Bellevue, and they were labeled in large letters "P. A. S." The moment the nose of the boat touched the landing at Bellevue, the Captain, as was his custom, ordered the freight for that point placed on shore, and the barrels were promptly bowled out upon the bank and carried into the warehouse. The agent, never suspecting this freight, went on board, and after the most rigid search, found nothing. The boat was permitted to proceed, but contrary to its usual haste in getting on its way as soon as the loading or unloading was complete, it remained the rest of the day and gave out that it would not sail until the following morning. The extraordinary good character of the boat on this occasion, and the unusually long delay in departing, roused the suspicions of the agent, who stationed a man to watch the boat and to whistle if he saw anything wrong.

Everything remained quiet until some time after midnight, except that a full head of steam was kept up in the boilers. Presently there was great activity on the boat, although with an ominous silence about it all The pilot, Captain La Barge, was quietly engineering the reloading of the barrels. He had spread tarpaulins on the deck and gang plank to deaden the noise, and the full crew of the boat were hurrying the barrels back in a most lively fashion. "What does this mean?" one of the deck hands asked of another. "We unloaded these barrels yesterday." "Why, don't you see?" was the brilliant reply of another, "they're marked 'P A S'; they've got to pass."

The work was quickly over and every barrel was on board, when the agent's sleepy guard awoke to the fact that something was going on. He uttered his signal, and the agent made haste to turn out and see what was the matter. La Barge and Captain Sire, who knew full well what the whistle meant, did not linger to make explanations. Captain La Barge seized an axe and cut the line. "Get aboard, men!" he shouted, "The line has parted!" The boat instantly dropped back into the current and then stood out into the river under her own steam. She was already too far from the bank to be reached when the reverend inspector appeared and wanted to know why they were off so early. It was about 3 A. M. "Oh, the line broke," replied Captain La Barge, "and it was so near time to start that it was not worth while to tie up again."[2]

This was a little too much for the agent, who could not understand how it happened that the boat was so thoroughly prepared for such an accident, with steam up, pilot at the wheel, crew at their places, and all at so early an hour. Next day he found that the barrels consigned to Sarpy were gone, and saw how completely he had been duped. Mortified and indignant, he reported the company to the authorities, and a long train of difficulties ensued, with ineffectual threats of cancelling the company's license. Meanwhile the alcohol found its intended destination in the stomachs of the Indians, and the company reaped the enormous profit which traffic in that article always yielded.

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[2] Captain Sire, in the log book of the *Nimrod*, Friday, May 10, 1844, says: "Il s'est passé encore longtemps avant que Messrs. les agents faisaient leur visite. Tout se trouvait satisfaisant. J'ai décidé de ne partir que demain matin, *et pour cause.*—May 10. Nous nous mettons en route avant le jour."

CHAPTER VI.

ROSE AND BECKWOURTH, THE CROW CHIEFS.

Adoption of white men into the Indian tribes — Edward Rose — His bad reputation — His service with Hunt — In Ashley's employ — Interpreter for Col. Leavenworth in the Aricara campaign — Interpreter for General Atkinson in 1825 — Rose's death — His grave — James P. Beckwourth — Youth — Enters service of General Ashley — Adopted by the Crows — Comment on his work.

IT was a common thing among all the Indians to adopt white men into the tribes and occasionally to make them chiefs. They were sensible of the superiority of the white man's intellectual power and the advantage which his knowledge gave him, and where they found one who would enter with true spirit into their own manner of living, they were always ready to honor him with authority. There were two conspicuous examples of this in the history of the Crow tribe during the period of the fur trade. Edward Rose and James P. Beckwourth were recognized Crow leaders for many years. Strange to say, both of these men were of mixed negro blood, but except in this respect there was no similarity. Of Rose nothing is known except what is reported by others. There is no written word of his in existence nor any verbal expression reported by others. Beckwourth, on the other hand, dictated his biography, and it was duly published. Beckwourth did not begin his career among the Crows until Rose was nearly done with them, and there are certain noted exploits related by Beckwourth in his autobiography which were probably performed by Rose.

EDWARD ROSE was the son of a white man, a trader among the Cherokee Indians, and of a half-breed Cherokee and negro woman. He was a man of powerful frame and in some of his experiences had received a cut through the nose, which gave him the nickname of *Nez Coupé*, or Cut Nose Rose. He was a man of few words, rather inclined to be moody in disposition. All in all, his appearance and habits may have justified the description given by Irving, particularly if one did not like him—"a dogged, sullen, silent fellow, with a sinister aspect and more of the savage than the civilized man in his appearance." Irving gives the following additional facts in Rose's early history: "Rose had formerly belonged to one of the gangs of pirates who infested the islands of the Mississippi, plundering boats as they went up and down the river, and who sometimes shifted the scene of their robberies to the shore, waylaying travelers as they returned by land from New Orleans with the proceeds of their downward voyage, plundering them of their money and effects, and often perpetrating the most atrocious murders.

"These hordes of villains being broken up and dispersed, Rose had betaken himself to the wilderness, and associated himself with the Crows, whose predatory habits were congenial to his own, had married a woman of the tribe, and, in short, had identified himself with those vagrant savages."

In 1823 Joshua Pilcher referred to Rose in one of his letters as "a celebrated outlaw who left this country in chains some ten years ago." Colonel Leavenworth in an official report of the same year, after commending the services of Rose as his interpreter, says: "I have since heard that he was not of good character."

It is apparent, therefore, that Rose bore a bad reputation, but the singular thing is that everything definite that is known of him is entirely to his credit. If judgment were to be passed only on the record as it has come down to us, he would stand as high as any character in the history of the fur trade.

Rose first went up the river either in 1807 or 1809, and soon after fell in with the Crow Indians, with whom he took up his abode. He apparently remained there until the spring of 1811, when he went over to the Missouri river. Meeting Wilson P. Hunt with his party of Astorians, he engaged as interpreter and guide through the Crow country. Hunt, during the journey, became thoroughly panic-stricken because he imagined that Rose was planning to betray his party to the Crows. There is not the slightest evidence of any such intention, and Hunt's conduct, which was the result of his inexperience, is little better than ridiculous. When the party passed the Crow country Rose was left with those Indians, much to Mr. Hunt's relief.

There is only one reference to Rose after this time and before the Aricara campaign. In 1812 he was in account with the Missouri Fur Company, apparently in the capacity of a free hunter, and a record of the account may be seen in one of the company books now in possession of the Kansas Historical Society. Rose probably remained with the Crows most of the time for the next eight or ten years, when he went to reside with the Aricaras, not later than 1820. and stayed with them for the next three years. With the revival of the trade under Pilcher and Ashley in the early twenties, Rose became useful as an interpreter. He acted in that capacity for Ashley when the latter met his disastrous defeat at the hands of the Aricaras in 1823. Rose had warned Ashley of his danger, for he had seen that something wrong was going on; but Ashley was deceived by the pretended friendship of the Indians and rejected the warning.

When Colonel Leavenworth came up the river a month later with his military force, Rose was engaged as interpreter, and was also given the nominal rank of ensign upon Ashley's recommendation. The report of Colonel Leavenworth shows that Rose took an active part in the operations before the villages, and it was upon him that the main reliance was placed for opening communication with the Aricaras. Rose gave Leavenworth notice of the intention of the Indians to evacuate the villages, but in this case, as in that of Ashley, his warning was not believed until it was too late. That Colonel Leavenworth placed a high value upon the services of Rose may be seen from the following reference contained in his official report to General Atkinson, dated October 20, 1823: "I had not found any one willing to go into those villages, except a man by the name of Rose, who had the nominal rank of ensign in General Ashley's volunteers. He appeared to be a brave and enterprising man, and was well acquainted with those Indians. He had resided for about three years with them; understood their language, and they were much attached to him. He was with General Ashley when he was attacked. The Indians at that time called to him to take care of himself, before they fired upon General Ashley's party. This was all I knew of the man. I have since heard that he was not of good character. Everything he told us, however, was fully corroborated. He was perfectly willing to go into their villages, and did go in several times."

When General Atkinson and Major O'Fallon went up the Missouri with the military expedition of 1825, Rose was employed as interpreter. The record of the expedition mentions him frequently and it is clear that he was of great use to the commissioners.

From this time on very little is known of Rose. He is mentioned now and then in connections that show him still among the Crows. He was seen there in 1832 by Leonard, who gives a somewhat extended though inaccurate account of him. Leonard saw him again in 1834, when he was the hero of an exploit which Beckwourth claims as his own. In November of that year there was a terrible battle between the Blackfeet and the Crows in the country of the latter tribe. The Blackfeet, who were at a disadvantage in point of numbers, had fortified themselves on a hill, where they succeeded in standing off the attack. The Crows made several ineffectual charges, but did not dare to assault the fort. Finally "the old negro," as Leonard calls Rose, came to their aid. He upbraided them for their failure, exhorted them to show more spirit, and then himself led the charge.

It was successful, and all of the inmates of the fort were slain.

It is not certain when or how Rose died, but one account says that it was near Fort Cass. With several companions he was surprised and surrounded by a band of Aricara Indians. They succeeded in holding them off for some time, but finally the Indians set fire to the prairie grass and the whites saw that the game was up with them. The fire would either burn them to death or force them to leave their cover, in which case they would fall an instant prey to the savages. What action they took can only be surmised, but a loud explosion was soon heard, and upon going to the spot it was found that all had been killed by the explosion of a keg of gunpowder. It is presumed that they ended their lives in this way rather than fall into the hands of the Indians.

Whether this story is true or not, the locality of the occurrence is most likely wrong, for Rose was buried on the banks of the Missouri nearly opposite to the mouth of Milk river. On any of the old steamboat itineraries of the Missouri river may be seen among the names in that vicinity, "Rose's Grave."

The second of the Crow chiefs above referred to was JAMES P. BECKWOURTH. The name of this redoubtable prevaricator was not Beckwourth until his biography came to be written. In the days when he was a roustabout on Missouri river steamboats, or a wild savage among his adopted tribe, he was plain Jim Beckwith, and is so carried on the rolls of the American Fur Company, who employed him at various times.

According to his own account (a most questionable authority, but we have no other upon most of the matters relating to him), he was born in Fredericksburg, Virginia, April 26, 1798. At the age of seven or eight he was taken to St. Louis with his parents, who soon moved to the point of land between the Mississippi and Missouri rivers near old *Portage des Sioux*. At ten he was put to school in St. Louis. At fourteen he was apprenticed to learn the blacksmith trade. After five years' service he fell out with his employer and hired out on a steamboat going up the Mississippi river. He remained in the vicinity of Galena for eighteen months. Returning to St. Louis he made a steamboat trip to New Orleans and caught the yellow fever on his way back. Surviving this attack he enlisted in Ashley's Rocky mountain party of 1824. He did not get to the mountains that year, but was sent back by Ashley for horses, and in the following spring went through to Green river.

After Ashley had made his fortune and retired from the mountains, Beckwourth entered upon a series of experiences that filled every month of his life with more adventures than the average mountaineer could boast of in twice as many years. The most important event, however, was his induction into the Crow nation as a *bona fide* member of that rascally commonwealth. Whether Beckwourth or the Crows got the worst of the bargain it might be difficult to decide, but the way it came about has all the naive ingenuity which characterizes the most elaborate of his yarns. Beckwourth was a mulatto or some other combination of white and African blood. The color of his skin, joined with other characteristics of physiognomy, made it quite possible to counterfeit a resemblance to the Indians which was hard to distinguish from the genuine article. One of his companions, by way of joke, told the Crows that Beckwourth actually belonged to their nation, having been separated from it in infancy, in some way or other. The Crows eagerly swallowed the story, and insisted on restoring Beckwourth to his long-lost place in a family of the tribe. Henceforth Beckwourth was a Crow, and the deeds of valor which he says he performed in the ensuing years exalted his name among his people and raised him to a high pre-eminence among the surrounding tribes.

It is idle to treat as reliable history the ingenious collection of heroic achievements which he has dignified under the style of "autobiography." The whole work is replete with fable, and there is probably not a single statement in it that is correct as given. So far as can be determined, only a few positive facts stand out with definite clearness. There was such a man as Beckwourth. He went to the mountains with Ashley. He somehow gained great influence with the Crows. He worked for the American Fur Company. He was never in government employ during this early period. He was seen now and then by parties who have recorded their journeys in this country, but he was certainly not a character of high standing or importance.

Knowing the slender basis of fact upon which his biography rests, it is at once accepted as fable and enjoyed as one of the richest assortments of yarns that has ever found a resting place within the covers of a book. It is not without value, either, for it does unintentionally now and then furnish sidelights that assist in checking the statements of others. While it makes no pretension to be, what it is not, reliable history, it reflects, in its very exaggeration, a living picture of the times. Its lack of fidelity to facts is readily forgiven where it would be condemned in a book like the *Lost Trappers*, which pretends to be truthful history.[1]

Beckwourth belonged to a class without which the history of those times would lose much of its spice and variety — he was one of those "charming liars," as some one has expressed it, who are delightful to listen to for the very enormity of their misstatements. The early West had many such characters, but few, like Beckwourth, have made for themselves a place in literature or history.

Although a man of the most ordinary importance, Beckwourth nevertheless stood fairly well with his fellows. He was employed by the American Fur Company, not at Beckwourth's alleged figure of $3,000 per year, but $800, a very good salary as wages then ran, and one that indicates good standing with the company. There are also references in the correspondence of the company that indicate as much.

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[1] The Life and Adventures of James P. Beckwourth, Mountaineer, Scout, Pioneer and Chief of the Crow Nation of Indians. Written from his own dictation by T. D. Bonner. New Edition edited with Preface by Charles G. Leland ("Hans Breitmann"), London and New York, 1892.

CHAPTER VII.

ALEXANDER HARVEY, DESPERADO.

Early life — Enters the fur trade — Troublesome disposition — Summoned to St. Louis — Makes winter journey — Re-employed — Ascends the Missouri — Thrashes his personal enemies — Kills Isodoro the Spaniard — Blackfoot massacre of 1843 — Atrocious murder of Indians — Attempted murder of Harvey — Forms the opposition company of Harvey, Primeau and Company.

ALEXANDER HARVEY[1] was one of the boldest men and most reckless desperadoes known to the fur trade. He was well built physically, about six feet tall and weighed between one hundred and sixty and one hundred and seventy pounds. He was strongly knit, capable of great endurance, and wholly devoid of physical fear. In ordinary intercourse, when not under the influence of liquor or passion, he was disposed to be fair and reasonable. But he had a perverse and unruly temper, and when once his enmity was aroused he was relentless and unforgiving.

He was born and reared in St. Louis, and was apprenticed to learn the saddler's trade; but his headstrong disposition got him into trouble with his employers and he left them. Before he had passed his minority he had entered the employ of the American Fur Company, and saw his first service at Fort McKenzie, the most remote of the company's posts. Here he remained for several years; but his wicked and intolerant demeanor toward his associates made his presence a constant source of irritation, and word was sent to St. Louis that he would have to be gotten rid of in some way. Mr. Chouteau accordingly sent him his discharge, and in order to insure his early departure requested him to report in person at St. Louis.

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[1] This sketch of Alexander Harvey is taken mainly from *Forty Years a Fur Trader*, by Charles Larpenteur.

It was Christmas time before the discharge arrived, and at that season of the year it was considered almost madness to undertake a long journey, particularly if one were alone. But Harvey, in spite of all remonstrance (no doubt feigned in large part), made ready to start the next morning on the long journey of nearly two thousand five hundred miles through a desolate and dangerous country. "I will not let Mr. Chouteau wait long on me," he said. "I shall start in the morning; all I want for my journey is my rifle, and my dog to carry my bedding." He reached St. Louis early in March, and Mr. Chouteau was so much impressed with the hazard of the performance that he actually renewed Harvey's engagement.

It was now about time for the annual steamboat to start up the river, and Harvey made ready to return at once. On his way up he remarked to Larpenteur, who was also returning to Fort Union from St. Louis, that he had several settlements to make with the gentlemen who had caused him his long winter's tramp. "I never forget or forgive," he said; "it may not be for years, but they will all have to catch it." Accordingly he kept his eye out for those whom he suspected of any complicity in the movement against him. He found one of them at Fort Clark and gave him an unmerciful pounding, remarking, when he was through, "That's number one." At Fort Union he found several more, and as fast as he could single them out from the sixty or more inmates of the fort, he would knock them down and administer a terrible drubbing.

Harvey kept on in the company's employ and served them well, but he had aroused the hatred of most of the other employes, and there were no doubt many plots to take his life. In 1841 he was sent down from Fort Union to Pierre with mackinaw boats laden with furs. He was to return on the spring steamboat from St. Louis. To assist him on the down voyage was one Isodoro, a Spaniard, and bitter personal enemy of Harvey. This singular action of the authorities at Union was believed by some to signify a plot to murder Harvey on the way. The trip, however, passed off all right and the two men returned with the boat to Fort Union.

Soon after their return Isodoro opened up hostilities in earnest, and started to parade around with his rifle, threatening to kill Harvey. The latter, thinking that he was drunk, kept out of his way and the day passed without further development. The next day all the clerks were ordered by Mr. Culbertson to go to the warehouse and make up the equipment for Fort McKenzie. Going there in a little while himself, Culbertson found that Isodoro had not put in an appearance as directed. He and Harvey then went into the retail store, where they found the Spaniard standing behind the counter. Harvey asked him what he meant by his conduct of the day before and then challenged him to come out. The Spaniard did not stir and Harvey then "went back into the store and said, 'You won't fight me like a man, so take that!' and shot him through the head. After this he went into the middle of the fort, saying, 'I, Alexander Harvey, have killed the Spaniard. If there are any of his friends that want to take it up, let them come on;' but no one dared to do so, and this was the last of the Spaniard."

Two years later Harvey was the principal actor in that diabolical tragedy at Fort McKenzie, the Blackfoot massacre of 1843. The trader in charge of the post was Francis A. Chardon, almost as desperate a character as Harvey himself. Through one of those chance misunderstandings which now and then occurred, the Blackfeet had killed a negro servant of Chardon. It happened that Chardon thought a good deal of the fellow and in his exasperation he resolved on a terrible revenge. He laid the matter before Harvey and the latter gladly agreed to carry out the details of Chardon's plan. This was to have the cannon of the bastion trained upon the door of the fort when the band next came in to trade. Two or three of the chiefs would then be admitted, and while the door was crowded with Indians the cannon would be discharged and the three chiefs massacred. It was expected that the rest of the Indians would be so panic-stricken that they would run, leaving their horses, furs, and equipments. The plan only partly succeeded, owing to failure to coöperate exactly. Chardon opened fire on the chiefs, but before Harvey could set off the cannon the Indians had begun to scatter. Only three Indians were killed and three wounded, including one of the chiefs. Harvey killed the wounded man with his knife and then made the squaws dance the scalp dance around the scalps of their fallen warriors. Chardon and Harvey secured very little of the booty which they had expected to obtain.

Another of Harvey's atrocious deeds while at Fort McKenzie has been preserved by Larpenteur. One day a party of five Indians undertook to steal some cattle belonging to the post. Harvey took some horses and started in pursuit of them. He soon overtook one Indian who had shot a cow, and firing at him, broke his thigh. The Indian fell to the ground and lay there, when Harvey came up and sat down beside him. The heartless fiend then "having lighted his pipe and made the poor Indian smoke, . . . said: 'I am going to kill you, but I will give you a little time to take a good look at your country.' The Indian begged for his life, saying, 'Comrade, it is true I was a fool. I killed your cow, but now you have broken my thigh; this ought to make us even — spare my life!' 'No,' said Harvey; 'look well, for the last time, at all those nice hills — at all those paths which lead to the fort, where you came with your parents to trade, playing with your sweethearts — look at that, will you, for the last time.' So saying, with his gun pointed at the head of his victim, he pulled the trigger and the Indian was no more."

Harvey eventually became a very heavy burden to the American Fur Company, for although an able man and a good trader, his outrageous deeds were too much for his associates to endure. There was a strong undercurrent of feeling against him which was liable at any time to result in his murder. Harvey himself began to see that his life was in danger, and he was probably ready to relinquish the service as soon as he could decently do so. The matter came to a head in 1845, when an abortive attempt to murder him ended in his severance of further connection with the company. Harvey was at this time in temporary charge of Fort Chardon, which had been built at the mouth of the Judith river after the abandonment of Fort McKenzie. Mr. Culbertson went up with the spring outfit from Fort Union to take charge and build a new post farther up. Malcolm Clark, James Lee, and the old interpreter Berger were along. These three men were enemies of Harvey and concerted together to kill him. When Harvey heard of the approach of the boat he rode some twenty miles down stream to meet it. Leaving his horse with a man who had come with him, he went on to the boat and entered the cabin. He offered to shake hands with Clark, but the latter replied that he would have nothing to do with such a man, and struck him over the head with a tomahawk. Berger also struck him with a rifle. Harvey grappled Clark and would have thrown him into the river had not Lee disabled him with a blow from his pistol across the hand. Harvey then escaped to shore, took his horse and fled to the fort. The employes took sides with him, and they placed the fort in a state of defense, refusing admission to any of the boat party. Finally, after much hard pleading, Culbertson was admitted. He had always been friendly to Harvey and he now agreed, on condition that Harvey would surrender the fort, to give him a draft for all his wages and a letter of recommendation. Harvey then left the fort in a canoe with one man.[2]

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[2] The foregoing account is confirmed in the following letter from M. H. Harvey, Superintendent of Indian Affairs, St. Louis, to Andrew Drips, Indian Agent for the tribes of the Upper Missouri, dated St. Louis, March 13, 1846:

"It having been satisfactorily established by a recent investigation

After stopping for two days at Fort Union he pursued his course down the river. Before leaving he said, "Never mind! You will see old Harvey here again." And sure enough, when he arrived at Fort Pierre he found several of the old employes of the American Fur Company who had become dissatisfied, banding together to form a new company. He joined them and became senior member of the new firm, which was called Harvey, Primeau and Company. It carried on quite an effective opposition to the American Fur Company for a number of years.

held at this office that Mr. Francis A. Chardon, one of the traders of P. Chouteau, Jr. & Co., has clearly violated the intercourse laws of the United States by directing the sale of spiritous liquors to Indians; and it having also been set forth *under oath* that three of the engagés of the said P. Chouteau, Jr. & Co., namely, James Lee, Malcolm Clark, and Jacob Berger, have attempted the murder of an American citizen, Alex Harvey; you are hereby required to order the above named persons out of the Indian country forthwith. It is highly desirable that they should, if possible, be sent here, in order that they may be dealt with according to law."

CHAPTER VIII.

MIRACULOUS ESCAPE OF HUGH GLASS.

Biographical notes — Wounded in Aricara fight — Joins Henry's expedition to the Yellowstone — Attacked by a grizzly bear — Nearly killed — Left with two companions — His companions desert him — Crawls to Fort Kiowa — Ascends the river to find his faithless companions — Arrives at Henry's fort on Bighorn river — Sets out for Fort Atkinson — Attacked by the Aricaras — Arrives at Fort Atkinson — Forgives his enemies — Continues in the fur trade — Finally killed by the Aricaras — Glass' Bluffs — Johnson Gardner avenges his death.

AMONG the anecdotes that have come down to us of wild life on the plains, none is better authenticated than that of the escape of Hugh Glass from the very portal of death at the hands of a grizzly bear. The story has survived in oral tradition and is well known by the older men of the mountains and plains who still live. It has thrice been embodied in written description.[1] The following account is taken from the *Missouri Intelligencer,* which in turn borrowed it from the *Portfolio.* It is in all respects the most circumstantial narrative extant and is evidently the most correct in its details. The incident is one of those which were so frequent in those early days, although it must have been considerably more noteworthy than the average or it would not have survived so long.

Hugh Glass was born in Pennsylvania — the only scrap of his early history that has come down to us. He was called an "old man" as early as 1824. Our first real knowledge of him is in 1823, when he is discovered to be one of Ashley and Henry's men. He received a wound in Ashley's fight before the Aricara towns.

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[1] *Missouri Intelligencer,* June 18, 1825; *Scenes in the Rocky Mountains* (Sage), p. 117; *Scenes and Adventures in the United States Army* (Cooke), p. 135.

After the Leavenworth campaign was over, Andrew Henry set out for the Yellowstone river and Glass was one of the party.[2] Their route lay up Grand river through a country interspersed with thickets of brushwood, dwarf plum trees and other shrubs indigenous to this barren soil. As these nomadic parties usually drew their food, and to a large extent their raiment, from the country through which they were passing, it was necessary to keep one or two hunters ahead of the main party in search of game. Glass, having a high reputation as a hunter and a good shot, was often detailed upon this important duty. On the present occasion he was a short distance in advance of the party, forcing his way through a thicket, when he suddenly came upon a grizzly bear that had lain down in the sand. Before he could "set his triggers," or even turn to fly, the bear seized him by the throat and lifted him off the ground. Then flinging him down, the ferocious animal tore off a mouthful of his flesh and turned and gave it to her cubs, which were near by. Glass now endeavored to escape, but the bear, followed by her cubs, pounced upon him again. She seized him by the shoulder and inflicted dangerous wounds in his hands and arms. His companion had by this time come up and was making war upon the cubs, but one of them drove him into the river, where, standing waist deep in the water, he killed his pursuer with a shot from his rifle. The main body now arrived, having heard cries for succor, and after several shots from close at hand, slew the bear as she was standing over the prostrate body of her victim.[3]

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[2] According to Cooke, Henry had eighty men bound for the headwaters of the Yellowstone. The incident with the bear occurred on the fifth day out, near evening.

[3] Cooke's account is quite different, the essential particulars being that Glass was caught too suddenly to retreat and staked his all upon a single deliberate shot; which, although it was ultimately fatal, was not immediately so. The bear rushed upon Glass with such speed and ferocity that escape was impossible. She overtook him, crushed him

Although still alive, the condition of the unfortunate hunter seemed well-nigh hopeless. His whole body was in a mangled condition. He was utterly unable to stand and was suffering excruciating torment. There was no surgical aid to be had and it was impossible to move him. Delay of the party might bring disaster upon all, yet it was repugnant to the feelings of the men to leave the sufferer alone. In this predicament Major Henry succeeded, by offer of a reward,[4] in inducing two men to remain with Glass until he should expire, or until he should so far recover as to bear removal to some of the trading houses in that country. These men remained with Glass five days, when, despairing of his recovery, and at the same time seeing no prospects of immediate death, they cruelly abandoned him, taking with them his rifle and all his accoutrements, so that he was left without means of defense, subsistence or shelter. The faithless wretches then set out on the trail of their employer, and when they overtook him, reported that Glass had died of his wounds and that they had buried him in the best manner possible. They produced his effects in confirmation and their story was readily accepted.

But Glass was *not* dead, and although the dread messenger had hovered for many days so near, yet the stricken sufferer would not receive him, but persistently motioned him away. When Glass realized the treachery of his companions, far from despairing on account of it, he felt a new determination to live, if for nothing else than to search out his base betrayers and call them to account. There was a spring near by and hither Glass drew himself. Over it hung a few bushes with wild cherries and near by were some buffalo berries that he could reach. Here he remained day after day, gradually nursing back his strength, until he felt

to the earth, and mangled him so terribly that it seemed as if he must have been killed. She then started after the other hunters, who barely escaped with their lives before the bear succumbed to the effects of Glass' shot.

[4] Cooke says that a purse of eighty dollars was made up by the men as a present to any two who would stay with Glass.

that he could undertake to leave his lonesome and unhappy camping ground. He resolved to strike out for Fort Kiowa, a post on the Missouri river a hundred miles away. It required magnificent fortitude to set out on a journey like that, still unable to stand, and with hardly strength to drag one limb after the other; with no provisions nor means of securing any, and in a hostile country where he was at the absolute mercy of the most worthless renegade that might cross his path. But the deep purpose of revenge held him up, and a stroke of fortune came to his rescue.

He happened one day upon a spot where a pack of wolves had surrounded a buffalo calf and were harrying it to death. Glass lay low until the calf was dead, when he appeared upon the scene, put the wolves to flight, and took possession of the calf. Without knife or fire, it was not an easy thing to turn to account his good fortune, but hunger is not fastidious and Glass most likely took counsel of the wolves as to ways and means of devouring what he required. Taking what he could with him, he pursued his way, with inconceivable hardship and distress, and at last reached Fort Kiowa.[5]

After an experience like that through which he had just passed, it might be supposed that Glass would have been inclined to rest at the fort, at least until his wounds could get well. But he had not long been there when a party of trappers came along in a boat bound for the Yellowstone river. This was just the opportunity that he wanted, and he promptly joined them, bidding adieu to the protection of the fort.

When the party were nearing the Mandan villages, Glass

[5] Cooke says that Glass' razor was left; that in the incident of the wolves and the buffalo calf he waited until the wolves had eaten enough to satisfy their hunger before he drove them off lest they should attack him. He further says that Glass went first to the Aricara villages, which he found deserted except by some dogs, and that he spent two days taming these before they would come near enough for him to get hold of them. This is, however, not probable, for Glass would not have gone deliberately back into the hands of those Indians while there was any other chance of life. Cooke also says that Glass then went to a trading post at the mouth of the Teton river.

thought to save a little time by going overland across a bend in the river to Tilton's fort, a trading establishment in that vicinity. It proved to be a lucky move, for on the following day all of his companions were massacred by the Aricara Indians.[6] Those always treacherous savages had but lately taken up their abode near the Mandan villages, and the travelers were wholly ignorant of the snare into which they were running. As Glass was approaching the fort he saw two squaws whom he at once recognized as Aricaras.[7] Alarmed at his danger he sought to conceal himself, but too late, for the squaws at once notified the warriors, who immediately began pursuit. Glass, still feeble from his wounds, made an ineffectual effort at flight. His enemies were almost within gun-shot when two mounted Mandans rushed forward and seized him. Great was his surprise and joy at this unexpected deliverance, and it gave him increased faith that he should yet live to accomplish his mission of revenge.

The Indians carried Glass to Tilton's fort, and the same night he left the fort alone and set out up the river. After traveling alone for thirty-eight days, all the way through hostile country, he at length arrived at Henry's fort near the mouth of the Bighorn river. Here he was received as one risen from the dead, for no one had doubted the story of his companions. Glass was chagrined to find that his companions had gone to Fort Atkinson.[8] Still intent on his purpose of revenge, he promptly accepted an offer of service as a messenger to carry a despatch to Fort Atkinson. Four men accompanied him and they left Henry's fort on the 28th of February, 1824.

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[6] This event is confirmed by an entry in the *Missouri Intelligencer* of February 25, 1824.

[7] Cooke's account of this affair is very much colored, too much so to be true, and was probably the result of the natural growth which such stories undergo through many repetitions.

[8] Cooke says that the younger of the two men was found at Henry fort; that he was petrified with fear when he saw Glass; but that Glass had compassion on him, and let him go on account of his youth, his penitence, and, more likely, because he considered Fitzgerald, who was the older, the real culprit.

Cooke has no account of Glass' adventures beyond his arrival at Henry's fort.

The route of the party lay eastward into the valley of Powder river, thence southward to the sources of that stream, and across into the valley of the Platte. Here they made some skin boats and floated down the river until they were out of the foothills, when, to their infinite dismay, they came upon a band of Aricaras, a part of Grey Eye's band, the chief who had been killed the previous summer by a shot from Leavenworth's artillery. The new chief's name was Elk Tongue. The warriors came down to the river and by many protestations of friendship induced the travelers to believe that they were sincere. Glass had at one time spent a whole winter with the chief, had joined him in the chase, had smoked his pipe, and had quaffed many a cup with him in the wigwam. When he alighted from his canoe the old chief embraced him as a brother. The whites were thrown off their guard and accepted an invitation to visit the chief's lodge. While partaking of the hospitable pipe a child was heard to utter a scream, and on looking around, Glass perceived some squaws carrying away their effects. The little party well understood what this meant, and springing at once to their feet fled with the utmost precipitation. Two of them were overtaken and put to death, one within a few yards of Glass, who had found concealment behind a point of rocks. Glass was thoroughly versed in the arts of Indian life and he succeeded in baffling their search until finally they abandoned it altogether. He had lost all of his property except a knife and flint, and thus equipped he set out in a northeast direction to find Fort Kiowa.[9]

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[9] "Although I had lost my rifle and all my plunder, I felt quite rich when I found my knife and steel in my shot pouch. These little fixens make a man feel right peart when he is three or four hundred miles away from anybody or anywhere — all alone among the painters [panthers] and the wild varmints." From article in *Missouri Intelligencer.*

The buffalo calves at this season were very young, and as the country abounded in buffalo, Glass had no difficulty in getting what meat he desired, while his flint enabled him to build a fire. He was fifteen days in reaching Fort Kiowa, and at the first opportunity went down the river to Fort Atkinson, where he arrived in June, 1824. Here he found his faithless companion (for he now cherished revenge only against one of the party), who had enlisted in the army. Thus, under protection of the law, Glass did not feel disposed to resort to extreme measures. The commanding officer ordered his property to be given up and provided him with a new equipment. Thus appeased, he relinquished his scheme of revenge and contented himself with entertaining the people of the garrison with stories of his marvelous experiences.

In weighing the two principal authorities for this story we are inclined to think that Glass' sudden relinquishment of his purpose of revenge may have been due to new light obtained from the two men who deserted him. It was asking a great deal for those two men to expose themselves to destruction for one whose life they doubtless believed was already as good as lost, and whatever may have been the considerations of humanity, it was only heroic indifference to personal safety that could have induced them to stay. They should have stayed, of course, but their failure to do so is not without its justification.

In Colonel Cooke's account, the name of one of the men left with Glass was Fitzgerald; the name of the other is not given, but he is said to have been a mere youth of seventeen and doubtless on his first trip to the mountains. Glass does not seem to have cherished revenge against him, but to have blamed Fitzgerald alone. Who the young man was is not known, but the late Captain La Barge, who remembers the tradition well, says that it was James Bridger. Bridger is supposed to have been born in 1804 and this would indicate 1821 or 1822 as the year of the occurrence. The discrepancy is not great enough to preclude the possibility of its being Bridger, but there is no other proof of it than this intangible tradition.

Glass turns up occasionally in the correspondence of those early days and we know that he was at Fort Union about 1830. He was at one time employed as hunter for the fort and used to hunt for bighorns on the bluffs opposite the post. These bluffs are still known as Glass' Bluffs.

Glass finally succumbed to his old enemies, the Aricaras, in the winter of 1832-3. The circumstances of his death were related [10] to Maximilian, Prince of Wied, who has thus recorded them: "Old Glass, with two companions, had gone from Fort Cass [winter of 1832-3] to hunt bears on the Yellowstone, and as they were crossing the river on the ice farther down, they were all three shot, scalped, and plundered by a war party of thirty Aricaras who were concealed on the opposite bank. These Indians, who are the most dangerous to the whites, went then to the sources of the Powder river, and it happened that Gardner with about twenty men and thirty horses was in the neighborhood. As it was dark, when they were seated about several fires, the Indians suddenly appeared, addressed them in the Minnetaree language, surrounded the fire and dried their shoes. Gardner, being well acquainted with the character of the Indians, immediately took some precautions, which were the more necessary, as a Minnetaree woman who was with the party told him that the strangers were Aricaras. He gradually collected his people around one of the fires, with their arms in readiness to act. He was also afraid for his horses, which were scattered on the prairie, and some of which were actually missing, and he had already sent some of his men to erect in the neighborhood what is called a fort, of trunks of trees, for the night. The Indians are accustomed, when they intend to steal horses, suddenly to give a signal, on which they all jump up, scatter the horses, and drive away with them. Gardner, aware of this, watched the enemy closely, and when, on the signal being given, they

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[10] By Johnson Gardner, the well-known free trapper.

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all withdrew, three of them were seized and bound. When the Aricaras perceived this, several of them came back, pretended to be innocent of the stealing of the horses, and begged for their captive comrades, but Gardner declared to them that if they did not immediately deliver up all the horses, the prisoners must die; one of them, however, had cut the bonds with which he was bound, and escaped. The Indians entreated for a long time, but were refused. The others, seeing that they must die, commenced their death song, related their exploits, and affirmed that they were distinguished warriors. One of them had old Glass' knife, and his rifle had also been seen in the possession of these Indians. The horses, however, were not brought, and the prisoners, alleging a pressing necessity, were taken aside; but in the thick copse they attempted to escape, on which one of them was stabbed and several shots were fired at the other, who was then killed with a knife. They were both scalped and I received one of the scalps as a present, which was unfortunately lost in the fire on board the steamer. Gardner, by way of precaution, had all the fires put out and passed the night in the fort, which was now completed. They were not disturbed during the night, and found, in the morning, that the Indians had retired with their booty, leaving the prisoners to their fates. The Aricaras had begged for one of them in particular, who was a celebrated warrior, and had even brought back three horses which they tied up near at hand, to exchange them for the prisoners; but Gardner did not attend to their request."

CHAPTER IX.

THE TREACHERY OF MIKE FINK.[1]

Early life — A great shot — His friends Talbot and Carpenter — Goes to St. Louis — Shoots off a negro's heel — Enters Ashley's service — Quarrels with Carpenter — Slays Carpenter — Killed by Talbot — Talbot drowned.

MIKE FINK, a character in early Western history, whose well-authenticated performances were so remarkable as to appear rather the creations of fancy than actual occurrences, was a native of Pittsburg, Pennsylvania. He had little education and made ridicule of what he had. He used to spell his name Micke Phinck and he loved to affect the extremes of barbarous jargon that characterized the language of the unlettered boatmen on the Western rivers. Mike early became fascinated with the boatman's life, and the sound of the boat horn was his most entrancing music. He learned to imitate its notes, so that when he first took service in a keelboat he could fill the office of trumpeter without any instrument. The river life suited his tastes and he longed to visit its remotest ports — even New Orleans, where he had heard that the people spoke French and wore their Sunday clothes all the week.

When the water was too low for navigation Mike spent most of his time in Pittsburg and vicinity, killing squirrels and shooting at a target for beef at the frequent Saturday shooting matches and company musters of the militia. He soon became renowned as the best shot in the country, acquiring the soubriquet of "Bangall," and on account of his extraordinary skill he was excluded from participation in the matches. As a price for this exclusion he was allowed the "fifth quarter" of the beef, as it was called — the hide and tallow. His usual practice was to exchange his "quarter" at a dram shop for whiskey, with which he treated everybody and particularly himself. He became fond of strong drink, but never was intoxicated. He could drink a gallon in twenty-four hours and not show any effects of it.

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[1] This story is given nearly verbatim from the *Missouri Intelligencer* of Sept. 4, 1829, quoted from *Flint's Western Review*, which in turn took it from an ephemeral publication called the *Western Souvenir*. The article was entitled "The Last of the Boatmen." Author not given.

His language was a perfect sample of the half-horse, half-alligator dialect of the early race of boatmen. He was a good deal of a wit, a quality which won him the admiration, but at the same time excited the fears, of the whole boating fraternity; for he usually enforced his jokes with a sound drubbing if any one had the temerity to refuse to laugh at them. He used to say that he told his jokes to be laughed at, and that no one should make light of them. The consequence was that Mike always had about him a band of laughing sycophants who were as afraid of his frown as a vassal might be of the displeasure of his lord.

Mike used to proclaim himself — "I am a Salt river roarer, and I love the wimming, and as how I am chock full of fight." And indeed he had a *chère amie* in every port who would "fight their deaths" in his defense.

Among his confederates were two men conspicuous for their prowess and were Mike's fast and confidential friends. Their names were Carpenter and Talbot. Each of the three was a match for the other in fighting and in markmanship and were adepts in the virtues and mysteries of Mike's calling.

Mike's weight was about 180 pounds. He was five feet nine inches high; with broad, round face and pleasant features; brown skin, tanned by the sun and the rain; blue but very expressive eyes, inclining to gray; broad white teeth; and square, brawny form, well proportioned, with every muscle fully developed, indicating the greatest strength and activity. Except as to stature he was a perfect model for a Hercules.

As already stated, he was an expert marksman, and many of his shooting feats have been related by those who profess to have witnessed them. On one occasion while ascending the Mississippi river above the mouth of the Ohio, he saw a sow with eight or nine pigs on the river bank. He declared in boatman phrase that he "wanted pig," and took up his rifle to shoot one. He was requested not to do so, but he nevertheless laid his rifle to his face, and as the boat glided up the river under easy sail, some forty or fifty yards from shore, he shot at one pig after another, cutting their tails off close to their bodies, but not doing them any other harm!

In 1821, while standing on the levee in St. Louis, he saw a negro on the river bank listlessly gazing at what was going on around him. He had a remarkably shaped foot peculiar to some African tribes. His heel protruded to the rear so far that his foot seemed to be as much in the rear as in front of the leg. This unshapely form offended Mike's eye and outraged his sense of symmetry. He determined to correct it. Lifting his rifle at thirty paces he actually shot the heel away, inflicting an ugly wound. The boy dropped to the ground, screaming "murder!" Mike was indicted in the Circuit court of the county, tried and found guilty.[2] His plea in justification of the offense was that he wanted to fix the boy's foot so that he could wear a genteel boot. Mike's punishment, which is not stated, could not have been very severe, for he was at liberty in the spring of 1822.

Mike's particular friend, Carpenter, was also a great shot, and it was a common thing for him and Mike to fill a tin cup with whiskey and shoot it from each other's heads at a distance of seventy yards. The feat was always performed successfully, the cup being bored through without injury to the person supporting it. It was a favorite performance with these two men, who regarded it as a fresh avowal of confidence in each other.

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[2] The writer of this article states that he himself had seen the record of the trial.

Mike had first visited St. Louis in 1814 or 1815 and was there frequently afterward. In 1822 he and his two friends, Talbot and Carpenter, enlisted in the company which General Ashley and Major Henry were organizing for their attempt to open up a trade with the mountain tribes. They enlisted in the threefold character of boatmen, trappers, and hunters. The company ascended as far as to the mouth of the Yellowstone, where a fort was constructed, from which the party was sent out in detachments to trap on the tributaries of the Missouri and the Yellowstone. Mike and his friends, with nine others, went to the Muscleshell river, where they found a warm and commodious habitation for the winter.

During their sojourn here Mike and Carpenter fell into a deadly quarrel, which, however, was smoothed over for the time by the interposition of friends. The cause is not certainly known, but there seems to have been a woman in the case, a squaw for whose good graces they had become rival aspirants. On the arrival of spring the little party visited the fort, and here, over a draught of whiskey, they renewed their smothered quarrel. Again they made a treaty of peace, and in evidence of their sincerity Mike proposed that they repeat their familiar feat of shooting the whiskey cup from each other's head. This would not only be a test of reconciliation, but of mutual trust and confidence as well.

A preliminary question to be decided was which should have the first shot. To determine this Mike proposed to "sky a copper," or in modern phrase, to flip a copper. This was done and Mike won the first shot. Carpenter, who knew from long experience the uncompromising character of Mike's hatred, declared his belief in his companion's treacherous intent, and that he should surely be killed. But he scorned life too much to repudiate his compact, and accordingly he prepared to die. He bequeathed his rifle, bullet pouch, powder horn, belt, pistol and wages to Talbot, and then went out to the place where the trial was to occur. He filled his cup with whiskey and placed it on his head, while Mike was loading his rifle and picking his flint. Carpenter stood up at the proper place, erect and serene, without a change of countenance to indicate what was passing in his mind. Mike leveled his rifle at the distance of sixty yards. After drawing a bead he took down his rifle and smilingly said: "Hold your noddle steady, Carpenter, and don't spill the whiskey, as I shall want some presently." He again raised his rifle and in an instant Carpenter fell, expiring without a groan. The ball had penetrated his forehead in the center an inch and a half above the eyes. Mike coolly set the breech of his gun on the ground, and applying his mouth to the muzzle, blew the smoke out of the barrel, all the while keeping his eye upon the prostrate form of his old-time friend. Finally he said: "Carpenter, you have spilled the whiskey!" He was told that he had killed Carpenter. "It is all a mistake," he said, "for I took as fine a bead on the black spot on the cup as I ever took on a squirrel's eye. How did it happen"? He then cursed his rifle, the bullet, and finally himself.

In this remote region where the power of the law was not yet known, and among a party who had an exaggerated dread of Mike's prowess, the crime was permitted to pass off as an accident, and Mike was allowed to go at large. But Talbot, who was Carpenter's fast friend, was convinced of Mike's treacherous intent, and resolved upon revenge whenever opportunity should offer. Some months afterward, Mike, in a fit of gasconading, declared that he had killed Carpenter on purpose and was glad of it. Talbot instantly drew his pistol, the same which Carpenter had bequeathed him, and shot Mike through the heart. Mike fell and expired without a word.

Talbot likewise was not called to account, for nobody had any authority to do so and few doubtless felt any inclination, as it was probably considered a just penalty for the killing of Carpenter. Moreover, Talbot was a terrible enemy, ferocious and dangerous as a grizzly of the prairies. About three months later he was present in the Aricara battle under Colonel Leavenworth, where he displayed a coolness which would have done honor to a better man. He came out of the battle unharmed, but about ten days later while attempting to swim the Teton river he was drowned. Thus perished the "last of the boatmen."[3]

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[3] Remarkable as this story is it has authentic confirmation. In General Clark's letter book on Indian Affairs, now in possession of the Kansas Historical Society at Topeka, there is a list of deaths among Ashley's and Smith, Jackson and Sublette's parties before 1830. The statement says that in 1822 Mike Fink shot Carpenter; that Fink was soon after shot by Talbot, who was later drowned in the Teton river The year should be 1823.

The following notice appeared in the *St. Louis Republican* of July 16, 1823: "By a letter received in town from one of General Ashley's expeditions we are informed that a man by the name of Mike Fink, well known in this quarter as a great marksman with the rifle, and is the same who some time since in this place shot off a negro's heel to enable him, as he said, to wear a genteel boot! was engaged in his favorite amusement of shooting a tin cup from the head of another man, when, by aiming too low, or from some other cause, shot his companion in the forehead and killed him. Another man of the expedition (whose name we have not yet heard) remonstrated against Fink's conduct, to which he (Fink) replied that he would kill him likewise, upon which the other drew a pistol and shot Fink dead on the spot."

CHAPTER X.

THE ADVENTURES OF JOHN COLTER.

Colter in Lewis and Clark expedition — Remains in the upper country — Enters Lisa's employ — Sets out to find the Crows — Crosses to Pierre's Hole — Fight with the Blackfeet — Colter starts for Fort Manuel alone — Crosses Yellowstone Park — "Colter's Hell" — Colter goes to Three Forks — Terrible adventure on Jefferson Fork — His miraculous escape — Result of Colter's adventures — His subsequent career.

JOHN COLTER was one of the private soldiers attached to the expedition of Lewis and Clark in the years 1804-6. When the returning explorers had arrived at their former winter quarters near the Mandan villages, some fifty-five miles above where Bismarck, North Dakota, now stands, Colter asked for his discharge in order that he might remain in the upper country and trap. He had met two hunters only the day before who were bound for the upper rivers and they offered him substantial inducements if he would accompany them. As his record on the expedition had been excellent, his commanding officers assented to the request, gave him his discharge, outfitted him in good shape, and he forthwith set out on his proposed expedition. This was August 15 or 16, 1806.

Colter remained in the upper country all the following winter, but in what precise locality is not known. It is probable, from subsequent events, that it was in the valley of the Yellowstone. In the following spring he set out, apparently alone, to return to St. Louis, but on his way met the expedition of Manuel Lisa near the mouth of the Platte river. To this band of adventurers into an unknown country the service of a man like Colter, who had spent a winter there and had twice passed entirely through it, could not but be very important. He was persuaded (if persuasion was necessary) to join the expedition and accordingly turned back a second time from his journey towards home.

Nothing occurred on the voyage with which his name is connected until the arrival of the expedition at the mouth of the Bighorn. Lisa had expected to find the Blackfeet nation very hostile on account of the loss of one of their number at the hands of Captain Lewis the previous summer on his way back from the Pacific.[1] It may have been a fear of this hostility that caused his unlucky decision to establish himself in the country of their enemies, the Crows. But it seemed that a detachment of Lisa's party met a band of Blackfeet, either before or soon after the arrival at the mouth of the Bighorn, from whom interesting and important information was obtained. Far from being hostile, these Indians evinced a pacific disposition and said that the provocation under which Captain Lewis acted was so obvious and flagrant that they had not cherished this act as a justification of hostility, and were ready to open relations of trade with the whites.

Lisa was greatly pleased at this prospect. He had already arranged to send Colter to notify the surrounding bands of Indians of his arrival, and he probably directed him to proceed also to the Three Forks of the Missouri and confer with the Blackfoot nation. It was a perilous adventure and one requiring great courage and hardihood. "This man," says Brackenridge, "with a pack of thirty pounds weight, his gun and some ammunition, went upwards of five hundred miles to the Crow nation; gave them information, and proceeded from thence to several other tribes." It seems that when Lisa arrived in the country the Crows were in the upper end of the valley, probably on Wind river, and Colter had to travel a long distance to reach them. He then most likely secured the services of a party of the Crows to guide him by the best trail across the mountains, for he could hardly have followed so well by himself what is now, and doubtless was then, the best route through this exceptionally rugged country. All available evidence indicates that Colter traveled directly from Wind river to Pierre's Hole, crossing the Wind River mountains by Union or Two-gwo-tee passes and the Teton range by the pass of the same name. The sublime and wonderful scenery and the remarkable topographical situation by which divergent streams flow from a common neighborhood to widely-separated river systems, and the ease with which the mountains could be crossed,[2] impressed Colter deeply. When he returned to St. Louis he drew the attention of Clark, Brackenridge and others to these remarkable features.

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[1] These Indians were Grosventres of the Prairie, but were always classed with the Blackfeet by the traders and trappers. See Part V., Chapter IX.

It is probable that it was in the valley of Pierre's Hole that "the party in whose company he happened to be," was attacked, as related by Brackenridge. This party, according to Biddle, was of the Crow nation and the attacking party were Blackfeet.[3] A fight ensued and Colter, by the necessity of the situation, was compelled to take part with the Crows. He distinguished himself greatly and received a severe wound in the leg. The Blackfeet were defeated, but not until they had seen the pale-face ally of their enemies, to whom, no doubt, they attributed their discomfiture.

The Crows, having conducted their guest across the mountains, and probably not deeming it wise to linger until the vengeance of the Blackfeet should bring reinforcements upon them, left Colter at this point and returned to their country. This conclusion seems certain from Colter's own narrative to Brackenridge, who says that notwithstanding the wound in his leg, "he returned to the establishment entirely alone and without assistance, several hundred miles." Colter, upon his return to St. Louis, gave to General Clark a description of his route, which the latter placed upon the map accompanying the report of the Lewis and Clark expedition and legended it "Colter's Route in 1807." This map makes it clear that from Pierre's Hole Colter undertook to reach Lisa's fort by the most direct route possible. Such was probably his plan. He knew that it would be folly for him now to proceed to the Three Forks, where he would become an instant victim of Blackfoot vengeance. The best thing to do was to make his way back to the fort and report to Lisa. To go by the way he had come would be to make a long detour and nearly double the distance over a direct line. Colter had a sufficient eye for topography to know that Lisa's fort lay about northeast of his position. He accordingly launched into the dense pine forests that cover the country on the northern flank of the Teton range and the southern portion of the Yellowstone National Park. It may with difficulty be imagined what must have been his astonishment when, emerging from the forests upon the shore of that surpassingly beautiful mountain lake near the source of the Yellowstone river, he found its shore steaming with innumerable boiling springs and geysers. As a matter of fact Colter's route was carrying him directly across the present Yellowstone Park, from southwest to northeast. He saw the strange phenomena on the shore of Yellowstone Lake, and along the course of its outlet for a distance of some forty miles. There is no record that he ever mentioned having seen the Falls of the Yellowstone, but he could hardly have escaped them, considering the course of his journey as outlined upon the map. He continued down the Yellowstone so long as it bore to the northeast on his general course, but left it by way of the valley of the East Fork where the main stream turns abruptly to the northwest.

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[2] "At the head of the Gallatin Fork and of the Grosse Corne of the Yellowstone [the Bighorn river] from discoveries since the voyage of Lewis and Clark, it is found less difficult to cross than the Allegheny mountains. Colter, a celebrated hunter and woodsman, informed me that a loaded wagon would find no obstruction in passing." Brackenridge. The Gallatin river was mistaken for one of the upper branches of the Yellowstone, probably; but it is clear that Colter here refers to Union or Two-gwo-tee pass at the head of Wind river.

[3] In all probability these Indians were Grosventres.

Thence he continued his course almost on the line of the present route to the northeast corner of the Park and eventually found his way back to Lisa's fort.

This very remarkable achievement — remarkable in the courage and hardihood of this lone adventurer and remarkable in its unexpected results in geographical discovery — deserves to be classed among the most celebrated performances in the history of American exploration. Colter was the first explorer of the valley of the Bighorn river; the first to cross the passes at the head of Wind river and see the headwaters of the Colorado of the West; the first to see the Teton mountains, Jackson Hole, Pierre's Hole, and the sources of the Snake river; and most important of all, the first to pass through that singular region which has since become known throughout the world as the Yellowstone Wonderland. He also saw the immense tar spring at the forks of the Stinkingwater river, a spot which came to bear the name of "Colter's Hell."

Colter had now accomplished enough to entitle him to lasting distinction in the cause of geographical exploration; but honors of a more perilous character still awaited him. As soon as spring opened — for Colter could not have returned to Lisa's fort before the arrival of winter — Lisa dispatched him again to visit the Blackfeet. Colter set out directly for the Three Forks of the Missouri where he seems to have employed his time trapping until the Indians put in an appearance. He was accompanied on this expedition by a companion named Potts, very likely the same one who had been a fellow soldier in the Lewis and Clark expedition. Biddle relates that when these two men met the Blackfeet these Indians did not even yet evince hostile intentions, but that an altercation soon ensued, ending in a combat in which Potts was killed and Colter made his escape. This affair was probably the same as that related by John Bradbury in his *Travels in North America*, and better known through Irving's *Astoria*. Colter gave the account of his miraculous escape to the English naturalist immediately after his return to St. Louis in the spring of 1810. All other accounts are based upon Bradbury's. The simple and direct language in which the author has clothed his recital tells the story so well that even the skilful pen of Irving adopted it almost without change. The adventure is one of those remarkable experiences which have now and then occurred in our frontier history, almost beyond credibility, but nevertheless in their details clearly possible. The story is here repeated in the exact words of Bradbury:[4]

"This man came to St. Louis in May, 1810, in a small canoe, from the headwaters of the Missouri, a distance of three thousand miles, which he traversed in thirty days. I saw him on his arrival, and received from him an account of his adventures after he had separated from Lewis and Clark's party; one of these, from its singularity, I shall relate. On the arrival of the party at the headwaters of the Missouri, Colter, observing an appearance of abundance of beaver there, got permission to remain and hunt for some time, which he did in company with a man by the name of Dixon, who had traversed the immense tract of country from St. Louis to the headwaters of the Missouri alone.

"Soon after he separated from Dixon, and *trapped* in company with a hunter named Potts; and aware of the hostility of the Blackfeet Indians, one of whom had been killed by Lewis, they set their traps at night, and took them up early in the morning, remaining concealed during the day. They were examining their traps early one morning, in a creek about six miles from that branch of the Missouri called Jefferson's Fork, and were ascending in a canoe, when they suddenly heard a great noise, resembling the trampling of animals; but they could not ascertain the fact, as the high, perpendicular banks on each side of the river impeded their view. Colter immediately pronounced it to be occasioned by Indians, and advised an instant retreat; but was accused of cowardice by Potts, who insisted that the noise was caused by buffaloes, and they proceeded on. In a few minutes afterwards their doubts were removed by a party of Indians making their appearance on both sides of the creek, to the amount of five or six hundred, who beckoned them to come ashore. As retreat was now impossible, Colter turned the head of the canoe to the shore; and at the moment of its touching, an Indian seized the rifle belonging to Potts; but Colter, who is a remarkably strong man, immediately retook it, and handed it to Potts, who remained in the canoe, and on receiving it pushed off into the river. He had scarcely quitted the shore when an arrow was shot at him, and he cried out, '*Colter, I am wounded.*' Colter remonstrated with him on the folly of attempting to escape, and urged him to come ashore. Instead of complying, he instantly leveled his rifle at an Indian, and shot him dead on the spot. This conduct, situated as he was, may appear to have been an act of madness; but it was doubtless the effect of sudden and sound reasoning; for if taken alive, he must have expected to be tortured to death, according to their custom. He was instantly pierced with arrows so numerous that, to use the language of Colter, '*he was made a riddle of.*'

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[4] See Bradbury's *Travels in North America*, Irving's *Astoria*, and the *Yellowstone National Park*, by the present author.

"They now seized Colter, stripped him entirely naked, and began to consult on the manner in which he should be put to death. They were first inclined to set him up as a mark to shoot at; but the chief interfered, and seizing him by the shoulder, asked him if he could run fast. Colter, who had been some time amongst the Kee-kat-sa, or Crow Indians, had in a considerable degree acquired the Blackfoot language, and was also well acquainted with Indian customs. He knew that he had now to run for his life, with the dreadful odds of five or six hundred against him, and those armed Indians; therefore he cunningly replied that he was a very bad runner, although he was considered by the hunters as remarkably swift. The chief now commanded the party to remain stationary, and led Colter out on the prairie three or four hundred yards, and released him, bidding him *to save himself if he could.* At that instant the horrid war whoop sounded in the ears of poor Colter, who, urged with the hope of preserving life, ran with a speed at which he was himself surprised. He proceeded towards the Jefferson Fork, having to traverse a plain six miles in breadth, abounding with prickly pear, on which he was every instant treading with his naked feet. He ran nearly half way across the plain before he ventured to look over his shoulder, when he perceived that the Indians were very much scattered, and that he had gained ground to a considerable distance from the main body; but one Indian, who carried a spear, was much before all the rest, and not more than a hundred yards from him. A faint gleam of hope now cheered the heart of Colter; he derived confidence from the belief that escape was within the bounds of possibility; but that confidence was nearly fatal to him, for he exerted himself to such a degree that the blood gushed from his nostrils, and soon almost covered the fore part of his body.

"He had now arrived within a mile of the river, when he distinctly heard the appalling sound of footsteps behind him, and every instant expected to feel the spear of his pursuer. Again he turned his head, and saw the savage not twenty yards from him. Determined if possible to avoid the expected blow, he suddenly stopped, turned round, and spread out his arms. The Indian, surprised by the suddenness of the action, and perhaps of the bloody appearance of Colter, also attempted to stop; but exhausted with running, he fell whilst endeavoring to throw his spear, which stuck in the ground and broke in his hand. Colter instantly snatched up the pointed part, with which he pinned him to the earth, and then continued his flight. The foremost of the Indians, on arriving at the place, stopped till others came up to join them, when they set up a hideous yell. Every moment of this time was improved by Colter, who, although fainting and exhausted, succeeded in gaining the skirting of the cottonwood trees, on the borders of the fork, through which he ran and plunged into the river. Fortunately for him, a little below this place there was an island, against the upper point of which a raft of drift timber had lodged. He dived under the raft, and after several efforts, got his head above water amongst the trunks of trees, covered over with smaller wood to the depth of several feet. Scarcely had he secured himself when the Indians arrived on the river, screeching and yelling, as Colter expressed it, 'like so many devils.' They were frequently on the raft during the day, and were seen through the chinks by Colter, who was congratulating himself on his escape, until the idea arose that they might set the raft on fire.[5]

"In horrible suspense he remained until night, when hearing no more of the Indians, he dived from under the raft, and swam silently down the river to a considerable distance, when he landed, and travelled all night. Although happy in having escaped from the Indians, his situation was still dreadful; he was completely naked, under a burning sun; the soles of his feet were entirely filled with the thorns of the prickly pear; he was hungry, and had no means of killing game, although he saw abundance around him, and was at least seven days' journey from Lisa's fort, on the Bighorn branch of the Roche Jaune river. These were circumstances under which almost any man but an American hunter would have despaired. He arrived at the fort in seven days, having subsisted on a root much esteemed by the Indians of the Missouri, now known by naturalists as *psoralea esculenta.*"

From this time on deadly enmity toward the white race became the settled policy of the Blackfeet Indians. There is probably little doubt that it was the *apparent* favoritism of the white traders toward their enemies the Crows that turned the scale.[6] For this appearance the action of Lisa in building his first post in Crow territory, and Colter's accidental presence in the ranks of the Crows when these Indians were attacked by the Blackfeet, are mainly responsible. Colter thus became in part the involuntary cause of that deadly feud which lasted beyond the life time of any of his contemporaries.

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[5] For a parallel case to that of Colter see narrative of the escape of Oskononton by hiding under a raft in a river. Ross' *Fur Hunters of the Far West*, p. 189.

[6] "This adverse feeling arose from a jealousy prevalent among all savage (and some civilized) nations, of those who trade with their enemies. The Crows and Blackfeet are almost continually at war; the company detached a party to trade with the former; this gave offense

Colter remained on the upper rivers until after Lisa's return in the summer of 1809 with an extensive outfit of the newly formed St. Louis Missouri Fur Company. But he very wisely abandoned the country before the disastrous events of 1810 at the Three Forks of the Missouri. He set out for St. Louis about April 1st of that year and made the descent of the rivers in thirty days, a distance, according to his own estimate, of some three thousand miles. Colter remained in St. Louis for a considerable time, and evidently talked a great deal about his adventures. He gave Clark important data for his forthcoming map of the Lewis and Clark expedition. He succeeded in making himself accounted a confirmed prevaricator, and a cloud of doubt and ridicule hung over his memory until far later years proved the truth of his statements.

Among those who esteemed Colter's accounts of sufficient importance to merit attention may be mentioned General William Clark, Henry M. Brackenridge, the author, and John Bradbury, the English naturalist. He was seen by Bradbury in the spring of 1810, immediately after his return to St. Louis. Bradbury also spent the forenoon of March 18, 1811, with Colter while en route up the Missouri with the Astoria expedition of that year. Colter had lately married and was living near the river above the point where the little creek La Charette empties into the main stream. He was full of admonitions in regard to the Blackfeet and urged the most careful measures to prevent trouble with

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to the Blackfeet, who had not the same opportunity of procuring arms, etc., the Hudson Bay factory being several days' journey from their hunting grounds, and with which they could not trade with equal advantage." *Louisiana Gazette,* July 26, 1810.

them. He was himself very much disposed to accompany the expedition, but he was too recently married to be able to come to a decision not to remain.

This is the last positive record that we have of the discoverer of the Yellowstone Wonderland. In the *Louisiana Gazette,* St. Louis, December 11, 1813, there appeared a notice by the administrator of the estate of "John Coulter, deceased," calling for a settlement of all claims for or against the estate. The final settlement left a balance in favor of the estate of $229.41¾. The deceased may or may not have been the subject of this sketch; but if so, his terrible experiences among the Blackfeet might very easily account for his early demise.

PART V.

THE COUNTRY AND ITS INHABITANTS.

CHAPTER I.

THE ROCKY MOUNTAINS.

View of the western country — The Continental Divide — The name "Rocky Mountains" — Physical aspect of the Rocky mountains — Attractions of mountain life — The Teton range — The Grand Teton — The Absaroka range — The Wind river mountains — The Bighorn mountains — The Black Hills — Other Wyoming ranges — Front and Rampart ranges — Pike's Peak — Mount of the Holy Cross — The Spanish peaks — The Uintah mountains — The Wasatch range — Montana and Idaho ranges — The Blue mountains — The Sierra Nevadas — The Cascade range.

WERE it possible for an observer to be poised far above the surface of the earth, near that locality where the Teton mountains lift their majestic summits above the clouds, and were he endowed with a power of vision that could pierce to the uttermost verge of the horizon, he would see beneath and around him a panorama which it is here desired to fix clearly in the mind of the reader. It is a panorama of mountains and plains, of lakes and rivers, of forest-crowned hills and treeless deserts, that stretches away to the distant alluvial plains of the Mississippi on the east and to the broad expanse of the Pacific on the west.

The first and most obvious feature of the landscape, thus spread out like a map before the eye, is its vast aggregation of mountains. Except far to the eastward, peaks innumerable arise on every hand. Some extend in well-defined ranges like broken ridges on the surface of the earth; other stand detached and alone like solitary protuberances from its crust. The variety of form and aspect is infinite. Here a pointed spire of primeval rock stands motionless among the shifting clouds; there a flat mesa or table, crowned with grassy sward, terminates in bold escarpments overlooking the valleys and plains below. Lofty fields of perennial snow, grey patches of rock where vegetation never thrives, broad areas of dark evergreen forest, wide-spreading slopes of native pasture — all combine to produce an effect which is different in every detail, yet displays as a whole a distinct uniformity of character.

Amid the seemingly purposeless and accidental distribution of these mountains, the eye may trace an irregular line across the country from north to south, along which the ground is higher than in the immediate vicinity on either side. It is the line which separates the waters that flow into the Atlantic from those which flow into the Pacific — the *height of land* between the two oceans, or, as it is commonly called, the Continental Divide. It is everywhere a line of deep sentimental interest, for it is not easy to realize that, from points so close together, streams should flow to destinations so widely separated. Little as the country may vary in its aspect on one side from that on the other, the imagination sees a difference, and the early traveler always considered himself "across the Rocky mountains" when he had passed this dividing line. "Here, hail Oregon!" reads an old itinerary of the Oregon Trail when South Pass is reached. It mattered little that the greater part of his journey still lay before him, with mountains to cross more difficult than any yet encountered; to him it seemed that his labors were nearly over when he saw the first tiny rivulet flowing to the very country whither he was bound.

The Divide is an extremely sinuous line, whose position may best be understood by consulting the map. Its general direction in passing from the Canadian to the Mexican border is a little east of south, crossing the northern boundary in the northwestern corner of Montana and the southern in the southwestern corner of New Mexico. Its total length is about 2,000 miles in passing through a little less than sixteen degrees of latitude. On the eastern slope the Mississippi system drains about 1,450 miles of this distance, and the Rio Grande the remainder, while on the western slope the Columbia drains about 730 miles and the Colorado system 1,270 miles.

It might quite naturally be supposed that the geological evolution of a continent would have left this height of land upon the summits of the more prominent ranges; and this is the case along a portion of the Bitter Root range between Montana and Idaho, the Wind River mountains in Wyoming and several of the lofty ranges in the state of Colorado. Generally, however, it lies on lower ground. In the vicinity of Yellowstone Lake, for example, it is but a little higher than the lake surface, and in central Wyoming it extends for many miles over a desert plateau of comparatively low altitude where the streams sink into the ground and never reach the true drainage of either ocean.

As the Divide is not generally on the crests of high mountains, passes over it are rarely difficult. The only characteristic passes are Union and Two-gwo-tee at the head of Wind river, a few over the range between Montana and Idaho, and several within the limits of the state of Colorado. In other places they are generally low and practicable, while in some sections, as in central Wyoming and northern New Mexico, the Divide can be crossed almost anywhere without discovering its actual location. The most celebrated crossing, the well-known South Pass, which holds so prominent a place in the early history of the West, scarcely deserves the name of a mountain pass. It is barely 7,500 feet high, and is situated in an open valley of gentle slopes in either direction, with little to mark it as a crossing of the main chain of the Rocky mountains. But as a gateway between the Atlantic slope and the Pacific, it became the most noted pass in the mountains.

It is a noteworthy fact that a natural geographical line of so great interest as the Continental Divide should have been so little utilized in establishing the boundaries of modern political divisions. It forms a state boundary in only one place and that is for about one hundred miles between Montana and Idaho. During the period of the fur trade, however, it was the eastern boundary of the disputed territory of Oregon all the way from the Spanish to the Russian possessions.

It was the Continental Divide and the ranges in the immediate vicinity which were known to the traders and trappers as the *Rocky mountains*. That name has now, however, no particular habitat and can scarcely be found upon any modern large scale map, where every separate range has its own local name. The term has come to mean, in the popular mind, the mountains between the Mississippi and the Pacific, just as "the Alleghenies" applies in a general way to the mountains between that stream and the Atlantic. The name itself is not a happy choice, for it might apply with equal propriety to any range of mountains in the world. It came into general use only in the present century. Early writers refer to these mountains as the Missouri, Mexican, Shining, Snowy, and Stony mountains, until finally from the French *Montagnes Rocheuses* came the modern name. The general system was also at one time referred to by geographers as the great Chippewyan system, and it would have been well if this name had survived, as the name Appalachian has in the East.

The physical aspect of the Rocky mountains is altogether characteristic. The traveler who passes hurriedly through them on the modern railroad is liable to contrast unfavorably their grey color, severe outlines and barren slopes with the verdure-clad hillsides of the Eastern states. Not so he, who, like the ancient trapper, frequents their unaccustomed haunts, comes in close contact with their wild and picturesque details, and observes their varying moods with the changes of each day and of the seasons of the year. This more intimate acquaintance discloses a wealth of beauty which the uniform green of the Eastern mountains does not possess, and it is said by reputable painters of natural scenery, that no mountains in the world, not even the Alps, afford scenes so satisfactory to the art as those of the Rocky mountains.

The general appearance of the mountains is of a greyish color where vegetation is scarce. This results not only from the exposed areas of rock *in situ*, but from the disintegrated rock which covers the mountains in many places with a sterile soil. The reddish color of iron oxide is widely present, particularly in the smaller hills of the Bad Lands, while yellow and other colors are of frequent occurrence.

The greater number of the northern mountains have extensive grassy slopes, whose broad areas, inclined upward as on a mighty easel, and spread out in rolling stretches with gentle depressions between them, look like beautiful carpets of green or brown, according to the season, softened by the mellow haze of distance and burnished by the crimson rays of the morning and evening sun. At the higher elevations, from five to ten thousand feet, forests of pine, fir and similar trees abound extensively and cover the mountains with a mantle of dark green or black. At frequent intervals throughout these forests are open spaces, filled with luxuriant grass, forming parks of faultless beauty amid the somber solitudes of the surrounding woods. Everywhere in these wild and sublime situations occur the always pleasing groves of the quaking aspen, a grateful relief either from the gloomy view of extensive forests or the uniform prospect of grass-covered slopes. Taken together, these varied arrangements of nature present an artistic appearance that reminds one of the cultivated sections in the mountain regions of Europe where man has contributed so much to enhance the beauty of nature.

The scenery of these mountains, moreover, is subject to continual and interesting change. Scarcely have the bleak storms of winter subsided, and while yet deep fields of snow lie upon the upper slopes, the soft blossoms of spring shoot eagerly from the scanty soil and oppose the gentle warmth of their blooms to the chill snow which is slowly receding before them. So profuse and beautiful are the flowers in these lofty regions that one would doubt if any other season could rival the springtime in beauty. But in truth the somber season of autumn is the most attractive of all. The early frosts cover the mountain sides with the most varied and gorgeous colors. The quaking aspen, which before was simply a mass of green upon the mountain side, now stands forth with tenfold greater distinctness in its rich autumnal foliage. The low growth of underbrush, which scarcely attracts the eye at other seasons, takes on a livelier hue, transforming whole mountain sides into fields of pleasing colors. Even upon those inaccessible and apparently barren slopes, where the eye had not before detected any sign of vegetable life, may now be seen spots of crimson and gold, as if nature had scattered here and there rich bouquets of flowers and bunches of fruit.

It is not upon the surface of the earth alone that are to be seen the grandeur and beauty of these regions. Even the wild mountain storms which are frequent at certain seasons have an attraction peculiarly their own, and all the more remarkable by the very contrasts which they produce. If, in passing, they display on a terrible scale the power of the elements, on the other hand, they leave behind them, in the sun-gilded clouds among the mountain tops, the most peaceful and pleasing pictures which nature anywhere affords.

Again, in the long rainless season, the atmosphere, like the painter's brush, tints the hills, in ever-varying intensity, with the purple and blue of distance. For this is pre-eminently a land of cloudless skies. The risings and settings of the sun are on a scale of sublime magnificence, while the moon rides among the mountain peaks with a serene splendor unknown in less favored climes.

It was among scenes like these that the mountaineer of early days imbibed that strong love of wilderness life which made him restive ever after under the restraints of civilization. That he looked at nature with an artist's eye, that he was often conscious of the beauty of his surroundings, that he ever paid much attention to these things, is scarcely probable. In his practical, hard-working life he doubtless often wished that there were no mountains, for they caused him many a wide detour and many a weary climb. So little use did he find for them that he gave very few of them names, and the mountain nomenclature of the West is mostly the outgrowth of a later period. Nevertheless he loved this rugged country and unconsciously yielded to those subtle influences which he made no attempt to analyze, but which bound him to wild nature with a force that he was unable to resist. The hardship of his life, the ever-present perils which environed him, the ties of kindred and home, none of these could extinguish the passion for mountain life when once he had tasted its pleasures.

Having taken this general view of the Rocky mountains as a whole, it will be of interest to notice more in detail some of the important local ranges. Directly beneath our assumed point of observation lies the most noted historic summit of the West, the culminating peak of the Teton range. In early times this range was more commonly known as the Three Tetons *(Les Trois Tetons)*, because from certain points, particularly from the west, three peaks stood out prominently above all the others. The range covers a comparatively small area, perhaps sixty miles long by ten to twenty broad, the notable part of it scarcely exceeding twenty miles in length. The Tetons are a prominent exception among the mountains of the surrounding country in that they rise in bold relief directly from the valleys around them. In general the mountains are so hemmed in by successive terraces of foothills that their true altitude can not be grasped by the eye; but the Grand Teton rises in sheer relief above the surface of Jackson Lake almost a mile and a half. The altitude of this peak is nearly thirteen thousand eight hundred feet, being the highest mountain of the central region north of Colorado, unless it be Fremont Peak in the Wind River mountains, which is of almost exactly the same altitude.[1]

It is not alone its great altitude that has made the Grand Teton so famous in frontier history. The topography of the surrounding country is such that its summit is visible at a great distance in almost every direction, while its appearance from wherever seen is striking and unmistakable. From Union Pass, for example, sixty miles east, it looks like a slender spire of pure outline piercing the sky, in appearance so remarkable that the beholder is forced to question whether it can really pertain to any mountain. It was the great prominence of this peak and its ease of identification from other mountains that made it so useful to the early travelers. Far and wide it was the beacon of the trapper. Familiar with its different aspects as seen from different directions, he could tell his position at once when his eye fell upon it.

Could this ancient monument disclose the record of what has transpired within its horizon, it would make known some of the most interesting events in the annals of the fur trade. For this was the paradise of the trapper. In every direction meandered the streams along which he was wont to pursue his trade, and near by were the valleys where the rival companies gathered in annual conclave to fight the bloodless battles of their business. There is scarcely an acre of open country in sight of it that has not been the scene of forgotten struggles with the implacable Blackfeet, while far and near, in unknown graves, lie many obscure wanderers of whose lonely fate no record survives.

The pass by which the Teton range is crossed connects the valley of Jackson Hole on the east with Pierre's Hole on the west. It is not a very high pass, but a singular one in its extremely narrow and ridge-like character. The approach from either direction is excessively steep and the traveler scarcely reaches the top from one side before he begins the descent on the other. The pass was extensively used in early fur trade days, and it is still the only practicable connection between the two valleys.

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[1] The Grand Teton is one of the most difficult mountains to climb of which there is any knowledge. To the present time (1901) it has been ascended by white men only twice; by Messrs. N. P. Langford and James Stevenson in 1872, and by Messrs. William Owen, Frank S. Spalding, John Shive, and Frank Peterson in 1898.

As our observer, from his aerial vantage ground, looks to the eastward beyond the Continental Divide, range upon range of lofty mountains greets his eye almost to the limit of the horizon. In the near foreground is a rugged chain of mountains, known in modern geography by the name *Absaroka,*[2] which fills almost the entire space between the Yellowstone and its principal tributary, the Bighorn river. It is one of the most compact mountain masses upon the continent, with fully a hundred peaks towering above the timber line, and it comes as near to being an impassable barrier as can be found in the Rocky mountains.

To the southwest the Absarokas merge into the Wind River mountains,[3] one of the most famous ranges of the west. Viewed from whatever point, these mountains present a sublime and imposing spectacle. From the valley of Green river, that favorite summer meeting-ground of the trappers and traders, they appear like a solid rampart to the eastward, with Fremont Peak (13,790 feet) the commanding summit; while from across the valley of Wind river, on the other side of the range, they bound the southwestern horizon with a wavy line so lofty as scarcely to seem to rest upon the earth. Immense snowfields lie upon these dizzy heights throughout the summer, and feed the innumerable lakes and streams which unite to form the rivers on either side.

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[2] This name as here applied is of recent date and is intended to commemorate the tribe of Indians (Absaroka, or Crows) who dwelt in the valley of the Bighorn river to the eastward of these mountains.

[3] This name more probably arose from the prevalence of southwest winds on the summits of these mountains than from any characteristic of the valley itself, as the name might imply. Union Pass, near the head of Wind river, is one of the windiest places in the world, and the trees and other vegetation are so bent over by the constant blast that in many instances they stand more nearly horizontal than vertical.

This mighty barrier lay directly in the route of travel between the valleys of the Yellowstone and Bighorn rivers on the northeast and those of Green river, Salt Lake and Snake river on the southwest and west. As a consequence, travelers had to bend out of their course and cross the mountains by the head of Wind river to the north, or in the other direction by South Pass at the head of the Sweetwater.

The Wind River mountains are celebrated in fur trade history and in native lore. The Indians clothed them with superstitious legends, as they always do any locality whose secret places they are unable to explore, while the scarcely less ignorant trapper felt a wholesome awe of their weird and gloomy retreats.

Beyond the valley of the Bighorn river, which lies at the eastern base of the Absarokas, rises the extensive range of the Bighorn mountains.[4] It is a typical example of detached mountain masses in the Far West. Extending north and south for one hundred and fifty miles between the Bighorn and Powder rivers, it forms a compact barrier through which there are but few practicable passes. The range abounds in fine scenery and is the home of a great number of lakes of Alpine beauty. Several of the peaks attain great altitude, the highest, Cloud Peak, being 13,300 feet high. This was likewise a range with which the trapper always had to reckon, for it lay directly in his route from the trapping grounds of the Bighorn to those of Powder river.

Far to the eastward of the Bighorn mountains, across a dreary waste of reddish hills and broken, uninviting country, the observer may descry the dark and shaggy eminences of the Black Hills, the extreme eastern outlier of the Rocky mountains. The dense forests of pine and stunted, wind-torn cedars gave to these hills, when seen from a distance, the dark appearance from which is derived their name. Like most of the other early names of the Northwest, this one was first used by the French. Long before any American had visited these parts, *Les Côtes Noires* were well known to the Creole trader and voyageur. The name is now restricted to the mass of mountains enclosed by the two forks of the Cheyenne river, in the modern states of Wyoming and South Dakota, but it had a far broader application in the early times.

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[4] This name is of course derived from the animal of the same name, *Ovis Montana*, which formerly abounded in this region, and is still occasionally seen there.

The Black Hills, though not to be compared as mountains with those farther west, were nevertheless a notable and important range. Harney Peak, the commanding summit, is 7,368 feet high. The scenery of the hills is, in many places, grand and sublime, and certain localities, like that of Sylvan lake and the Spearfish cañon, bear high comparison with the finest scenery on the continent. The abundance and variety of floral growth add an element of beauty which is one of the chief attractions.

These mountains were famous in Indian lore, and many were the legends concerning their mysterious labyrinths, and the dangers and terrors concealed within them. No other mountains in the entire West surpassed them in this regard. At the same time they were a great resource to the surrounding tribes, who made annual excursions thither in quest of wood for the various uses of their manner of life.

To the trapper, the Black Hills were the best known, as they were the nearest, mountains that he was wont to frequent. They were rich in the commercial products which were the objects of his pursuit, and his operations embraced the entire region.

Extending southwesterly from the Black Hills of Dakota, southerly from the Bighorn range, and southeasterly from the Wind River mountains, are many detached spurs and isolated peaks which merge together in the region along the upper North Platte and the Laramie rivers, and extend thence southerly to the high mountains of Colorado. These ranges are now known under a variety of local names, but in the fur trade period they were collectively a part of the Black Hills. Probably the most noted summit in those scattered groups is Laramie Peak, nearly fifty miles west of old Fort Laramie, and one of the best known landmarks of this region.

The territory embraced within the modern political divisions of Colorado and northern New Mexico is a typical mountain region. It is here that the Rocky mountains appear in all their grandeur — massive, lofty and sublime. The principal peaks are nearly all over 14,000 feet high. In marked contrast with other portions of the West, where the approach to the main ranges is through a long succession of foothills, extending perhaps hundreds of miles, the mountains of central Colorado rise at once in full magnitude directly from the prairies. This is notably true of the Front and Rampart ranges, which face the plains to the north and south of Denver. As seen from far out on the prairies they appear like a mighty wall of corrugated outline, projected against the western sky, while from the mountains themselves the far-stretching savannas resemble the unbroken vista of the ocean.

Two prominent peaks stand out from these ranges distinctly visible for a hundred miles to the eastward. They are Long's Peak in the Front range, and Pike's Peak at the southern extremity of the Rampart range. The former peak was named in 1820 for Major Stephen H. Long, whose exploring party discovered it. It is 14,271 feet high. Pike's Peak is now the best known summit of the Rocky mountains, and holds a prominence with the traveling public which the Grand Teton formerly held with the trappers and traders. Pike's Peak, though previously known to the Spaniards, was first seen by Americans, so far as we positively know, in 1806, when it was visited, though not ascended, by Lieutenant Z. M. Pike, of the United States Army, whose name, after many vicissitudes and changes, it now bears. The Grand Teton was not discovered until a year later, when it was probably seen by John Colter. Pike's Peak is 14,147 feet high, or 347 feet higher than the Teton summit. Like the latter, it rises in sheer relief a mile and a half above the valley below. The summits of these two mountains are strikingly different, one being of rounded outline, and comparatively easy of access; the other a rocky pinnacle, which it is almost impossible to climb.

In southern Colorado the Sangre de Cristo and Culebra ranges are similarly situated to the Front and Rampart ranges farther north, although they do not rise so directly from the eastern plains. At the southern extremity of the Sangre de Cristo range is Blanca Peak (14,464 feet), dominating the valley of the upper Rio Grande, and the highest mountain in Colorado. A little to the eastward of the Culebra range rise the Spanish Peaks (12,720 feet), two prominent outlying summits which were noted landmarks during the period of the Santa Fe trade and subsequent exploration.

Back of the easternmost line of the Colorado mountains a continuous succession of ranges extends to the western boundary of the state, so diversified in detail that it would be impossible in the space here available to describe them. In the central portion of the state they are of lofty and massive proportions, extending in every possible direction, and controlling the topography of the country. Farther west their appearance changes materially, assuming more the character of bad lands, though on a stupendous scale, and they are known, from their peculiar forms, as mesas, book cliffs, buttes, and the like.[5]

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[5] Among the loftier peaks of central Colorado may be mentioned the Mount of the Holy Cross, a name which dates from the fur trade period. Its modern application, however, is not the same as it was then. It now belongs to a mountain some fifteen miles northwest of Leadville, Colorado—a noble peak 14,176 feet high—on the face of which there is a cross formed by the perpetual snows which gather in longitudinal and transverse chasms on the mountain side.

As noted by Farnham, 1839, the name applied to a conical hill about

The mountain passes of Colorado are the most noted in the Rocky mountains, now that South Pass has lost its former prominence. The great development of this region, owing to the discovery of valuable mineral deposits, has given to the question of getting over the high ranges, an importance which it did not possess during the fur trade era. Many new passes, never crossed by the trapper, have been found by the engineer, and these, as well as the old ones, are among the chief modern attractions in this home of mountain scenery.

The mountainous sections of Colorado were not frequented by the trapper to the same extent as were the regions farther north. Possibly the very difficulty of traversing the country made it less desirable to operate in. It was, of course, well known, and its streams were worked for beaver, but it did not compare in this respect with the region about the sources of the Missouri, Columbia, and Green rivers.

Passing from the broken and rugged terrain of Colorado into the northeastern corner of Utah, a remarkably compact and imposing chain of mountains is encountered, to which the name Uintah has been given. It extends almost due east and west for about a hundred miles, and forms such a solid mass that very few practical crossings have been discovered in modern times. The culminating summit of the range is Gilbert Peak, 13,687 feet high. These mountains lie directly athwart the course of Green river, which is forced to make a detour of about sixty miles to the eastward in order to get by them. The country round about was

eight hundred feet above the general level. The cross was formed by "two transverse seams of what appeared to be crystallized quartz." The upper end of the cross was "about 100 feet below the summit." "The upright was about 60 feet in length; the cross seam about 20 feet, thrown across the upright near its top." "The trappers have reverently named this peak the Mountain of the Holy Cross."

Singularly enough this mountain is not far distant from the modern Holy Cross Mountain. As near as can be determined from the imperfect description it was just north of the pass over the Continental Divide near Breckenridge, Colorado.

famous trapping territory, as may be inferred from the fact that nearly all of its many streams bear names that were given by the trapper.

Extending north and south through the state of Utah, and for a long distance forming the divide between the valleys of Green river and Great Salt Lake, is a prominent chain of mountains known by the name of Wasatch. Nearly east of the southern extremity of Great Salt Lake it forms a junction with the Uintah mountains. A little farther north it is broken by a deep rift, through which a railroad now finds its way. Still farther north it rises again in a bold mass of mountains which occupies the interior of the horse shoe formed by the course of Bear river.

The entire region to the northward between the valleys of Green river on the east and Bear and Snake rivers on the west is filled with mountain ranges, known under different names, but forming part of a general system which extends from the Wasatch and Uintah mountains on the south to the Teton and Wind River ranges on the north. These mountains abound in fine streams, which made them a favorite resort of the trapper. The great highway across them in the early days was that now followed by the Oregon Short Line railroad.

Extending from the region of the Yellowstone National Park along what is now the boundary line between Montana and Idaho is a long and almost continuous range of mountains which makes a broad sweep from the west to the north, and finally leaves the territory of the United States in northwestern Washington. The southern portion of this range to about latitude forty-six degrees is still known on some maps by the name Rocky mountains. North of this point it bears the name Bitter Root as far as it forms the state boundary. It then takes the name of Cœur d'Alêne, and extends in a northwest direction across the narrow strip of northern Idaho and the northeast corner of Washington into the British possessions. The southern portion of this range, as above described, lies on the Continental Divide, but this line leaves it just north of latitude forty-six, swings eastward to the near vicinity of Helena, Montana, and then extends north to the boundary.

The whole of western Montana is very mountainous, and the name of the state was well chosen. The mountains extend far eastward to the center of the state in smaller detached ranges, such as the Judith, Belt, Little Rocky, and Bear Paw mountains. In that section immediately north of the National Park, they assume a massive and lofty character, which denotes their close connection with the Absaroka range already described.

The entire country among these mountains was a fruitful one to the trapper, and was frequented as much as any in the West. The ranges had numerous and easy passes, and were not, except in the few places already noted, formidable obstacles to travel. Several of the most important Indian tribes made their home in the country round about. The region was therefore one of great activity in the days of the fur trade, although it was mainly exploited by British companies in that portion which lay on the Pacific slope.

West of the Bitter Root mountains in central Idaho the country is excessively broken by ranges of mountains that separate the eastern tributaries of Snake river. The Salmon river and Clearwater mountains are the most important. They extend across the state westwardly to and beyond Snake river, which has cut its way through them in one of the most imposing cañons in the world. To the west of Snake river these mountains continue into Oregon, where the range extends first southwest and then west well toward the center of the state. They are here known as the Blue mountains, and are particularly noted in fur trade history as the difficult barrier that lay between the Columbia river and the upper course of the Snake. The topography of the country was such that all travel between these rivers, the Snake and the Columbia, was compelled to traverse this range. The same necessity exists today and the railroad now follows essentially what was once the Oregon Trail.

Southwardly from the Salmon river and Blue mountains, through southern Idaho and Oregon, western Utah and eastern Nevada, even to the borders of California and Arizona, was a region which, though not mountainous in the sense of those just described, contained many broken and detached ranges, isolated peaks and buttes, and singular irregularities of ground which fall under none of the usual designations. These eminences are not generally of great altitude, but owing to the surrounding topography are often visible at immense distances and therefore serve as important landmarks. The Three Buttes of the Snake river plain are conspicuous examples.

There remains to be considered that extensive mountain system which lies parallel to the Pacific coast and forms the final barrier between the Mississippi valley and those of California and Oregon. In its southern portion it is known as the Sierra Nevada, and farther north as the Cascade range.

The Sierra Nevada is probably the most extensive and massive array of mountains in the United States, if not in North America. Its lofty peaks, its successive ranges, which give great depth to the system, its never-melting snow fields and its deep and gloomy cañons have made it a most formidable barrier to travel, which even at this day is crossed in but few places. The principal mass of these mountains extends upwards of two hundred miles parallel to the San Joaquin valley of California. In this portion of its course are found its loftiest peaks, reaching to an altitude of nearly 15,000 feet. In the western foothills is the marvelous cañon of Yosemite, and near by a grove of those gigantic redwood trees which are one of the wonders of nature.

The Sierra Nevadas break down somewhat in northern California, and merge for a short distance with the Coast range, which lies close to the ocean. Klamath and Pitt rivers here find their way through the range from the eastern side to the Pacific. North of the Klamath the name Cascade begins, and continues to the British boundary. The principal gap through the Cascades is where the Columbia river makes its way to the ocean, although there are other practicable openings both north and south.

The Sierra Nevada and the Cascade ranges abound in noble peaks, including some of the loftiest in the country. Owing to their proximity to the coast, and the low altitude of the valleys to the westward, their elevation is more apparent than in other sections of the mountains. The three most notable peaks are situated respectively at the southern, central, and northern portions of the range. Mt. Whitney, in southern California, is the highest peak in the United States, with an elevation of 14,898 feet. In the space between the Sierra Nevada and Cascade ranges is Mt. Shasta, 14,350 feet, one of the best known mountains of the West. Mt. Rainier, north of the Columbia river in Washington, has an altitude of 14,444 feet, and is plainly visible from sea level on Puget Sound. It is one of the few mountains in the world which stands out in full relief, and it affords perhaps the most perfect example of a single mountain peak to be met with in nature.

The mountain ranges last considered were not of great importance in the American fur trade, because in only three or four instances did the operations of the American companies reach so far. The streams of the Cascade range, however, were thoroughly exploited by the Hudson Bay Company, and were as rich a field as the West afforded. The expeditions of the Astorians and of Nathaniel J. Wyeth to the Columbia, and of J. S. Smith and I. R. Walker to California, were the only instances in which Americans ever seriously attempted to develop the fur trade of these mountains.

CHAPTER II.

VALLEYS AND PLAINS.

The typical mountain valley — Valleys along the Three Forks — The Gallatin valley — Valley of the Three Forks — Great Bend of the Yellowstone — Gardner's Hole — Jackson Hole — Jackson's Little Hole — Pierre's Hole — Upper Green river valley — Brown's Hole — Ogden's Hole — Cache valley — The Grande Ronde — Old and New Parks and Bayou Salade — San Luis valley — The Plains — Change in the country westward from the Missouri — The Bad Lands — The "Great American Desert" — Prairie roads — Storms of the prairies — Prairie fires — The mirage — The plains not a trapping country.

THE "holes" of the mountains, as they were called by the trappers, were of paramount importance in the business of the fur trade, as indeed they have been in all enterprises which man has carried on among the mountainous regions of the earth. Nothing in nature is more beautiful than a typical valley in the Rocky mountains. Around it tower the eternal hills, like faithful sentinels, to guard and protect it. Perennial streams of crystal water, fresh from the pure snows on the mountain sides, flow down from every direction into the plains below. Converging lines of foliage mark the courses of these streams as they mingle one with another, until all are united in a broad ribbon of verdure, which meanders across the valley and finally leaves it through some opening in the surrounding hills. Scattered here and there are groves of the quaking aspen, but generally the lowlands are covered with nutritious grasses, which enjoy here a more healthy and luxuriant growth than in the arid tracts below the mountains. The flowers of spring likewise bloom in greater profusion and with more exquisite colors than where nature has deprived them of the moisture which they require.

These mountain valleys must be distinguished on the one hand from extensive basins, like that of the Bighorn river, which comprise a great variety of topography, and on the other, from those contracted openings through the mountains which fall more properly under the designation of cañons. The open valleys here considered were in the nature of parks, grateful oases in the waste of rugged country, where the wild game loved to gather and the mountaineer found rest from his prodigious labors. In these charming retreats he was wont to pitch his camp, where there were water and grass for his stock, wood for his fire, shelter from the tempest, and convenience to the objects of his pursuit. What he did not find here, unfortunately, was protection from savage foes, who, like their pale face brethren, loved the valleys and made them their home.

There were hundreds of these valleys in the Rocky mountains, but it will here be possible to refer only to a few of the more important. Each of the three forks of the Missouri had its parks or basins. The beautiful valley of upper Red Rock creek, the source of Jefferson Fork, known in recent years as Centennial valley, was a much frequented spot in early times. Near the sources of the Madison there were also numerous parks, which are still without distinctive names; but which were familiar resorts to the hunters and trappers. All of these valleys were connected by easy passes over the Continental Divide with the equally important basin of Henry Lake, one of the ultimate sources of the Columbia.

Along the lower course of the Gallatin and its principal tributary, the East Fork, is one of the most extensive and beautiful mountain valleys in the West. It is the vacant bed of an ancient lake, surrounded by a cordon of mountains which are flecked here and there with patches of snow and are clothed in the varying hues of the atmosphere, dependent upon their distance from the beholder. The valley is upwards of thirty miles long, with a remarkably even topography and a bountiful supply of water from the Gallatin and its various tributaries. It was the scene of great activity during the entire period of the fur trade and yielded untold wealth to the coffers of the traders.

The immediate valley where the Three Forks unite to form the Missouri is of very limited area, but was of great importance in the early days. A glance at the map will show its strategic and commercial relation to the surrounding country. A short distance to the eastward lay the valley of the Yellowstone, while to the south, by easy passes over the Divide, access was had to the Snake river valley and the region beyond. North and west lay an extensive country prolific in the fruits of the chase. The Three Forks themselves and their numerous tributaries were the best trapping ground on the continent. All of these considerations appealed strongly to the early traders, and very soon after the return of Lewis and Clark, in 1806, attempts were made to found a trading post there. These efforts, though more than once repeated, always failed on account of the hostility of the Blackfeet Indians; and a sort of fatality has hung over the spot even to the present day. In recent years, the government went to the upper end of the East Gallatin valley to found a military post, where has also arisen the principal town in this part of the country. The ground around the Three Forks has been staked out into streets and blocks of a city yet to be, but not a house stands upon the spot. It is a singular fact, and is accounted for by some, on the ground that the valley was the immemorial fighting ground of hostile tribes, while the soil was sterile on account of the alkali washed down from the higher sections. Be this as it may, it seems as if nature had ordained that this meeting place of the sources of the world's longest river should remain unchanged by the hand of man.

The Great Bend of the Yellowstone, where Livingston, Montana, now stands, was a picturesque spot hemmed in by lofty hills, and a convenient point to the trappers, who often passed their winters there. In ascending the Yellowstone from the Great Bend to its source, a series of cañons is passed between which the valley spreads out into open parks, where the bottom lands and hillsides are carpeted, like the green hills of France, with meadows so uniform and lawn-like as scarcely to seem the product of unaided nature.

In an open valley of most attractive surroundings on one of the upper tributaries of the Yellowstone, a free trapper, Johnson Gardner, plied his trade as far back as 1830, and gave the river and valley his name. "Gardner's Hole" was the uncouth name of this beautiful spot which every tourist now sees as he enters the Yellowstone National Park.

South of this government reservation lies one of the most celebrated of all the mountain valleys, still known by the name first given it, Jackson Hole.[1] The name embraces the whole valley along the eastern base of the Tetons from the north shore of Jackson Lake to the mouth of the Little Grosventre river, a distance of upward of forty miles.

A most striking feature of this wonderful valley is its extremely flat topography, surrounded as it is by some of the most rugged mountains on the continent. Its beauty is greatly enhanced by the presence of several lakes which lie immediately at the base of the Teton range, and in whose placid surfaces these mountains stand reflected as from the most perfect mirror. The landscape thus formed has been the despair of painters of natural scenery since the valley became frequented by students of nature. Neither pen nor pencil, nor the modern perfection of the photographic art can reproduce its marvelous beauty.

Whatever the trapper may have thought of the scenic attraction of this valley, he certainly loved the spot, and it was always one of his favorite haunts. It was a most convenient base of operations. From north to south through it flowed the Snake river, with its sources mainly in the Yellowstone Park farther to the north. Three large tributaries joined the main stream in this vicinity and all were full of beaver when the trapper first visited them. Jackson Hole was thus a point from which small trapping parties could explore the many branches of these larger streams and to which they could return with the fruits of their labors. It was probably also safer from Indian incursions than were other valleys less difficult of access. There was no easy way to get into it, and from most directions it was then, and is still, exceedingly difficult to enter it at all.

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[1] Named for David Jackson, of the firm of Smith, Jackson and Sublette, who did business in this region from 1826 to 1830. (Ferris.)

Another valley which bore the name of Jackson was Jackson's Little Hole. It was situated at the source of Hoback river just across the Divide from Green river, and was the first camping place after leaving Green river for Jackson or Pierre's Hole.

From Jackson Hole a trail led across Teton Pass to the scarcely less celebrated locality of Pierre's Hole.[2] The Teton or Pierre river drains the western slope of the Teton mountains. It rises in Teton Pass, and flows slightly west of north for about thirty miles, when it turns due west and flows into Henry Fork of Snake river. It was that portion of the valley that lay along the northerly course of the stream to which the name Pierre's Hole applied. The open valley is about twenty-five miles long, and five to fifteen broad. On the right hand, looking down stream, rises the mighty wall of the Teton range, while on the left is the much less lofty range of the Snake River mountains. Through the center of the valley wound the inevitable line of trees which showed where the waters from the mountains were flowing, and many a tributary could be discovered coming in from the highlands on either side. The valley is a most attractive one, and is now being rapidly filled up with industrious settlers.

Pierre's Hole was a particularly favorite resort of the trader. Several of the annual rendezvous were held here.

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[2] "It receives its name from an Iroquois chieftain, who first discovered it, and was killed in 1827 on the source of the Jefferson river." (Ferris.)

and there are still in existence business papers of the Rocky Mountain Fur Company which bear the date, "Pierre's Hole, Under the Three Teton Mountains." The events of the year 1832, which are narrated in detail elsewhere, would alone make the valley famous.

About seventy miles southeast of Jackson's Hole was an amphitheatre-shaped basin situated where Green river emerges from the Wind River mountains in a westerly direction and turns due south on its long journey to the Gulf of California. The valley was not so closely hemmed in by mountains as were those just described, but it was even more important to the fur trade. It was a favorite rendezvous for many years, and witnessed some of the most notable gatherings of the Indians and traders that ever took place in the mountains.

Two hundred miles by the river channel below the locality just described, Green river flows for sixty miles in a direction nearly due east along the northern base of the Uintah range. Some twenty-five miles of this distance is through an open valley from five to six miles wide, hemmed in by the mountains in the most effectual manner. The river enters and leaves it through dismal, deep, and impassable cañons, and take it all in all, it is little else than a solitary mountain prison, surrounded with the grandest scenes of nature, but cut off entirely from the outside world. This was the famous Brown's Hole[3] of the trappers, known in modern geography by the more pleasing name of Brown Park. In the later years of the fur trade the valley was much frequented by the trappers, who even maintained at one time an inferior trading post there.

Near the northeastern shore of the Great Salt Lake there was a deep recess in the range of lofty mountains to the east, known in early times as Ogden's Hole, where now the city of Ogden, Utah, stands. It was a sheltered cove of striking form and beauty, and no doubt was frequented by the retainers of that noted trader whose name it now bears.[4]

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[3] This name is understood to have been given for the trader who first did business in the valley.

The most important valley near Great Salt Lake, however, was that traversed by Bear river in northern Utah and southern Idaho. It was an extensive valley, bounded on the east by a noble range of mountains, and on the west by smaller hills, where all the conditions were to be found that made a desirable stamping ground for the trapper. Today it is the home of a busy population, with ten or more thriving villages all in sight at once. It is still known by its original name of Cache Valley, which arose from some unrecorded circumstance, possibly from the cache of beaver furs belonging to Peter Skeen Ogden which shadowy tradition says was "lifted" by General Ashley, to the latter's great financial advancement.[5]

A little valley which deserves a passing notice lies in the eastern flank of the Blue mountains in Oregon, directly on the line of the old Oregon Trail. It was named by the French, from its form, Grande Ronde, and was a well-known camping and resting place on the Trail.

The principal open valleys in the Colorado mountains are those now known as the North, Middle and South Parks, but which the trappers knew as the New and Old Parks and the Bayou Salade.[6] In them the North Platte, Grand and

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[4] Peter Skeen Ogden, a leading spirit of the Hudson Bay Company in the decade between 1820 and 1830.

[5] See Part II., Chapter XVI.

A. W. Ferris, in *Life in the Rocky Mountains*, says that the valley was named from the circumstance that there an employe of Smith, Jackson and Sublette, while engaged with others in building a cache in the side of a bank, was killed by the bank caving in. "His companions," says Ferris, "believed him to have been instantly killed, *knew* him to be well buried, and therefore left him." It is quite possible that the writer was somewhat mixed as to the locality of this accident. An exactly similar mishap occurred in the Wind river valley in 1830.

[6] Where the names New and Old, as applied to the North and Middle Parks, came from, I do not know. Sage says that the modern North Park was not at first as much frequented by hunters as was the Middle Park, and as a result game increased in it at the expense of its southern neighbor. When the hunters began to be drawn to it extensively they

South Platte rivers respectively find their sources. They are typical mountain valleys, although considerably larger than those just described. They were great resorts for the trappers, and the Bayou Salade in particular was a favorite retreat for both the white man and the Indian.

On the upper course of the Rio Grande there were two notable valleys, known by the names of Taos and San Luis. Taos was the northernmost of the Spanish settlements in New Mexico and was a famous place in the annals of the fur trade. The San Luis valley, as an opening among rugged mountains, is one of the most striking in the entire West. Surrounded by lofty peaks, among which is the dominating summit of Sierra Blanca in the Sangre de Cristo range, it is itself as smooth and even as the flattest prairie — so uniform in surface that the railroads which radiate from Alamosa in the center of the valley extend in almost straight lines for a distance of from twenty-five to fifty miles. The trappers who plied their calling in these valleys and the country to the westward were mostly connected with the Santa Fe trade and brought their furs either to Santa Fe or Taos for sale or shipment to the United States.

Such are a few typical mountain valleys among the hundreds that were known to the trapper. His claim upon them has long since been transferred to a more civilized posterity, who have utilized the streams where he once trapped for beaver to extract from the soil a less precarious livelihood than they ever yielded to him. Their beauty and grandeur remain and their utility has been increased, but the romance

called it the New Park in distinction from that with which they had been longer acquainted. New or North Park was also called the Bull Pen by the trappers.

The word bayou in the early French usage in this country meant a slack water slough connected with some larger stream. "In township 12 South Range 76 West, on the south Fork of S. Platte river in South Park, Colo., are two saline lakes and a salt creek. It was anciently a great resort for buffalo and was given the name Bayou Salade by the trappers." (Berthoud.)

of their early occupation by white men has permanently passed away.

What was included in the term "plains," as used in frontier history, it would be difficult to say. "Across the plains" generally meant from the Missouri river to one's destination, whether across the prairies of Kansas, the staked plains of Texas, the sand hills of Nebraska, the Bad Lands of Dakota, the sage brush tracts scattered everywhere throughout the West, the lava wastes of Idaho, or the alkali deserts of Utah, Nevada, and California. The term "prairies," in popular use, referred more specifically to the region between the Missouri river and the foothills of the mountains, those broad and treeless areas, often rolling and diversified, yet as often flat as the level sea, lying in part within the region of rains and luxuriant vegetation, and in part in the arid zone beyond.

To convey an idea of the external aspect of the country which the trader and trapper passed over and lived in while absent from the frontiers, it will be expedient to follow them in a journey from the Missouri to the heart of the mountains and note those features which especially appealed to them in the line of their particular business.

For one hundred and fifty miles out from Independence, or say to the 98th meridian, the traveler was in a country agriculturally rich. Here nature reveled in exuberant growth, for there were a bountiful soil, abundant rain, and dew in the morning, as in the most favored localities in the East. All descriptions of the prairies in the early days abound in enthusiastic praise of this delightful region, and nearly all foresaw in it the home of populous communities yet to be. With little qualification this was true of the country north and south, within these limits of longitude, to the boundaries of the United States. Although it lay mostly out of the timber belt, the soil was exceedingly fertile, and whatever man might intelligently cultivate was bound to flourish there.

But as the traveler held on his way another one hundred and fifty miles, or say to the 101st meridian, a notable change came over the face of the country. The rolling hills sank into the even plains, as uniform and monotonous as the naked ocean. Look in whatever direction he might, no undulation of the ground restricted the limit of vision, and it needed only a passing sail to make the illusion complete. He observed that the soil was less deep and rich, the rains evidently much less frequent, the water very scarce except in the larger streams, the trees along the river less abundant, and vegetation generally less luxuriant, if not actually dwarfed and scanty. Before the western limit of this belt was reached there began to appear infallible signs which denoted proximity to the desert. Among them were the sage brush, the cactus, and the prairie dog, those singular products of the vegetable and animal worlds which seem to flourish only where nature is parched and dry. The soil also began to show a white efflorescence denoting the presence of the dreaded alkali, which from here on would render many of the streams and pools unfit for drink and would fill the air along the road with a suffocating dust.

The third belt of three degrees of longitude, extending to the 104th meridian, carried the traveler into the worst features of the plains country. He found himself in the hilly region which betokened proximity to the mountains, whose glistening crests he could already discern in the distance. Rock began to appear in the bluffs along the streams. In some localities, as in the valley of the North Platte, the elements have carved these rocks into remarkable shapes to which the early traveler gave such names as Court House, Chimney, and the like. Generally, however, the exposed rock has been mellowed down by the action of time into gentler slopes where vegetation finds a precarious foothold.

A curious and remarkable region in this zone is that comprising the sand hills of Nebraska. These rounded hills, composed of sand with a thin covering of turf, are often of considerable height, and are so like one another that it is impossible to distinguish between them. Landmarks are wanting, and once off the trail one is almost certain to get confused as to his bearings. Not even the dense and trackless forest is so easy a place to get lost in. These hills, though useless for agriculture, afforded fair grazing for the buffalo.

Farther north in Dakota between the Black Hills and the Missouri is a tract of country where nature seems to have outdone herself to render her aspect hideous and forbidding. The whole country is cut up by gullies, or *coulées,* while the ancient surface of the ground is indicated here and there by harder material, which has resisted the action of time and stands aloft above the general level. The elements have carved these hills into the most varied and fantastic shapes, sometimes like the domes and towers of a city, and again unlike anything which art or nature has elsewhere produced. In some of the hills or bluffs there is a distinct stratification, the appearance of which was confused by the paths of the mountain sheep in former times, as it is by domestic sheep now. The soil has an oily, slippery consistency when wet which makes it impossible at such times to clamber up the steep slopes. On these barren, ashy hills no vegetation thrives, or in such lonesome, sickly forms as are found only where life pines and languishes from the poverty of nature. Little animal life is seen except the snake and the lizard, unless indeed from some lofty pinnacle the stately bighorn surveys in solitary independence the scene of desolation around him.

These are the Bad Lands, the *Mauvaises Terres* of the French, and present the hopeless side of the Western country, a true picture of the Great American Desert. In one form or another the Bad Lands are found over a vast extent of country. The whole region between the Black Hills and the Bighorn mountains, extending north to the Missouri, contains tracts of this character. The valley of the Bighorn is full of bad lands. South of the Sweetwater river in Wyoming are extensive areas which differ essentially from the

Dakota bad lands, but surpass them, if possible, in general worthlessness. Here may be seen those soda lakes where the alkali of the plains exhibits itself in a concentrated form, which has annihilated every form of life within it. In this strange and uninviting region are extensive fossil remains, which indicate that in past geological time, conditions more favorable to life prevailed here. The Pacific side of the mountains even outdoes the Atlantic slope in its desert appearance. The valley of Green river from its source to its mouth abounds in bad lands of one form or another In Colorado and Utah the broken character of the country is on a stupendous scale, cut up with impassable cañons and walled in in every direction by lofty and almost vertical cliffs. The vast lava plains of Snake river with their suffocating dust, the barren deserts of Utah and Nevada with their salt fields and waterless stream beds, and the lifeless wastes of southern California are a part of this scene of widespread desolation. To the south the picture is equally uninviting. It would be difficult to say what proportion of the immense region of New Mexico and Arizona is of this worthless character, but it is large enough. To the east of the mountains the Cimarron desert, so often fatal to human life from its lack of water, is a fair example of the evil conditions which geologic evolution has imposed upon this country.

As already observed, these desolate tracts present the hopeless side of the Western country and constitute in the aggregate the Great American Desert. The early geographers were not wrong in placing such a desert on their maps, much as they have been ridiculed for doing so. Their error lay rather in its location and in their failure to note the many important exceptions. While it was then true, and will so remain until geologic and climatic changes shall have worked a revolution in this country, that west of the 103rd meridian and east of the Sierra Nevadas there is not a point from which one can not find within a radius of a hundred miles true desert conditions; still the country was not all of this character. There were the thousand valleys through which coursed perennial streams destined to make them rich with cultivated fields, and there were the mountains with their hidden treasures of wealth; while even the desert tracts yielded a scanty pasturage which in the aggregate sustained countless multitudes of grazing animals. These were very important exceptions to the rule of the desert, and their existence has confounded nearly all the early predictions concerning the future of this country.

Having considered the general character of the country which the traveler had to pass through in crossing the "plains," it remains to notice some of their more striking peculiarities which had a practical bearing upon these overland journeys and upon the business for which they were undertaken. Except in the spring of the year the roads over the prairies were excellent, the fords practicable, and traveling a comparatively easy matter. Not so in the season of rains, when the roads were converted into quagmires, the streams were unfordable, and camping wretchedly uncomfortable. In general the outgoing expeditions of spring encountered great difficulties from high water both on the prairies and in the mountains; but on their return in the autumn these obstacles had mostly disappeared. The drawbacks of spring travel were in some degree compensated by the balmy and invigorating air of that season, while the better conditions that prevailed later in the season lost some of their advantage from the parched and dusty state of the country, which was hard both upon man and beast.

The storms of the prairies, whether in summer or winter, were always characterized by great severity. The cyclonic character of the summer storms has become well known since the country has settled up. They were the same in the early days, and many are the records of demolished camps, stampeded herds, drenched and damaged cargoes, when these terrific tempests have descended upon the solitary caravans of the plains. In winter the prairie blizzard was then and is now death to the wayfarer who is caught in it away from shelter. Consequently travelers rarely ventured across the plains in winter, and death has overtaken more than one rash adventurer who has wandered too far from a safe retreat.

A common peril on the prairies after the spring rains had ceased and the grass had become dry was the prairie fire. How these could have been so frequent[7] as they seem to have been is a mystery. When the conditions were ripe for one of those fires — that is, when the growth of grass had been abundant, but had become dry, and when a brisk, dry wind was blowing, the phenomenon was one of marvelous beauty, if viewed from a point of safety, but of peril and terror when the beholder stood in its way. The speed of the fire over the prairies depended of course largely upon the wind and was therefore a very variable quantity; but that at times it exceeded that of the fleetest horse there is abundant evidence. Likewise the intensity of the fire varied greatly. When driven by a strong wind over areas of tall dry grass it was a veritable traveling furnace, and no matter how great its speed nor how quickly past, it was death to whatever it touched. In other instances, with a mild wind and short grass, the line of flame could anywhere be crossed with impunity. The spectacle of a strong prairie fire at night was one of the most magnificent that nature affords. The long sweeping line of fire stretching from one part of the horizon to the other, the lambent flames soaring high into the air, the flitting forms of animals driven suddenly from cover, and the reflection of the brilliant light in the clouds, composed a scene of truly terrible sublimity.

The usual method of avoiding the danger of these fires was to start one in the immediate vicinity of the person or company in peril. This fire, at first small and harmless, would soon burn over an area large enough to form a safe asylum, and when the sweeping cohorts of flame came bearing down upon the apparently doomed company, the mighty line would part as if by pre-arrangement and pass harmless by on either side.

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[7] "The prairies are on fire in every direction" is a frequent entry in the old Fort Pierre journals.

Among the most singular, and at times the most distressing, phenomena of the plains were the mirages. Although these were seen in nearly all parts of the West, it was in the southern plains that they were most prominent. To see them to the best advantage requires favorable conditions both physical and mental. Not alone must the plain, the atmosphere, and the sun be right, but the effect will be greatly heightened if the mental state of the beholder has been suitably prepared for the phenomenon. To this end, suppose him to be journeying over one of those barren, even tracts which so extensively abound to the south of the Arkansas, and particularly in the Cimarron desert. The sun is almost unendurable in its intensity; the ground is parched and dry; the grass withered and sparse; no tree or shrub relieves the landscape; no sign of water is visible anywhere; while the oppressive heat and the cravings of thirst tax his endurance to the utmost. In the midst of his sufferings comes a promise of relief. Several miles ahead of him in a gentle depression he distinctly sees a body of water; it may be a river, but more probably a lake. Its surface gleams in the sun and here and there it is roughened by passing breezes. The shore line is distinct and is bordered with objects that look like trees. The sight inspires new life; the spirits rise; and the pace of the traveler is quickened with fresh energy. It is wasted effort on the part of more experienced companions to urge caution in trusting so implicitly to appearances. Confidently he pushes forward with his eyes fixed on the refreshing sight before him. But as he nears it a change comes over the scene. The surface of the lake begins to show gaps and breaks that he has never noticed on any other lake. These gaps increase as he approaches; the water surface diminishes; it begins to have a trembling, shimmering appearance; it finally vanishes from sight; and when the traveler reaches the spot he is still surrounded by the same cheerless landscape over which he has already traveled so far. With what tenfold power does his thirst now come back, enhanced by the bitter disappointment! The lesson of the mirages or "false ponds" was hard to learn and it required many a chastening such as has been described to place one fully on his guard against it.

The cause of the phenomenon of the mirage is not perfectly understood, and has received a variety of explanations, some maintaining that it is due to refraction alone, others to reflection. Strange as it may seem, these false appearances, if we may trust the many accounts of observers, are sometimes erect, at other times inverted. The necessary conditions of an effective mirage are a broad plain with an extensive horizon free from conspicuous undulations; a dry, hard ground which will reflect readily the rays of the sun; warm, dry and clear weather, so that the eye can easily scan the ground for several miles. Wislizenus holds that the true mirage always shows objects double, the lower erect by refraction through the stratum of air next to the ground, and the upper inverted by reflection against the surface of a different stratum some distance above. Whatever may be the true explanation the delusion is a perfect one, and its tantalizing effect upon the thirsty wayfarer was often more distressing than the thirst itself.

The plains were not, strictly speaking, trapping territory, for the beaver and other fur-bearing animals dwelt mainly within the mountain regions. But they were the home of the buffalo and the buffalo was the life of the fur trade. The countless herds of these useful animals which overran the territory of the Far West, supplying the necessities of life to its nomadic population, were a product of the plains country, and but for this limitless expanse of grazing territory, their existence in such enormous multitudes would have been impossible.

CHAPTER III.

RIVERS AND LAKES.

THE MISSOURI SYSTEM AND THE PLAINS RIVERS.

Importance of streams to the trapper — The three great river systems — Their historical associations — Their relation to the fur trade — The Missouri river — Its length — Its name — Mouth of the Marias — Mouth of the Yellowstone — The Yellowstone and its tributaries — Locality of the Mandans — Locality of Fort Pierre — The Platte river — Mouth of the Kansas — Mouth of the Missouri — Physical characteristics of the Missouri — The Plains rivers — The Arkansas — The Cimarron river — The Canadian river — The Red river — The Rio Grande.

ALTHOUGH the mountain systems of any country are the primary factors in determining its topography, they are, from a practical point of view, of less importance in human affairs than are the streams of which they are generally the source. Particularly true was this of the business of the fur trade. Except in the case of certain desert tracts, the mountains were the principal barriers to travel which the trapper had to cross in his ubiquitous wanderings. The valleys of the streams, on the other hand, were the universal routes of travel and the places of abode during his sojourn in the wilderness. Every thing that he required was to be found there. Along their banks were groves of cottonwood which furnished wood for fuel, temporary huts, trading posts and boats, and ample shelter both from the heat of summer and the cold of winter. He also found there the various animals of which he had need, and particularly the beaver, whose capture was the main object of his labors. In the larger valleys dwelt the Indian tribes with whom he traded so extensively. The great rivers furthermore afforded him his cheapest means of transporting his furs to market. Everything contributed to give the water courses of the country an importance which no other physical feature possessed. This may account for the prominence given to the delineation of the streams upon the early maps, as may be seen by comparing them with modern railroad maps; and also for the fact that nearly all the streams, quite unlike the mountains, bore well-known names given by the trappers, most of which they retain to the present day.

The water courses of the West which were of importance to the trapper belonged nearly all to three great systems — the Missouri, on the Atlantic slope, and the Colorado and Columbia on the Pacific. There were besides a few streams in the southeast, such as the Arkansas and the Rio Grande, and also many on the Pacific coast; and there were the lakes and rivers of the Great Basin which do not flow into the ocean. It is a noteworthy fact that within a distance of fifty miles from the Grand Teton, where our imaginary observer is stationed, lie the sources of the three river systems just referred to. To the northeast the Continental Divide sweeps in a full quarter circle from a little west of north to a little south of east, and just beyond it are the sources of the Three Forks of the Missouri, the Yellowstone, and the Wind and Bighorn rivers. About a hundred miles southeast, one of the tributaries of the Platte, a water of the Missouri, finds its source. Within the arc of the circle just described lie the sources of Snake river, the southern branch of the Columbia, while southeast in the direction of Fremont Peak, are the headwaters of Green river, the principal source of the Colorado.

The areas drained by these three systems within the United States, nearly all of which were operated in by the fur companies, are approximately as follows:

The Missouri system above Independence	490,000	square miles
The Colorado system	248,000	” ”

The Columbia system within the United States	220,000	square	miles
The Arkansas and Canadian above their junction	146,000	"	"
The Rio Grande above El Paso	42,000	"	"
The Great Basin	215,000	"	"

The Missouri river, being much longer than the Colorado and the Columbia, has a gentler slope and a slower current. As is well known, it is navigable nearly to its source. The rivers across the Divide, on the other hand, have a rapid fall, broken by frequent cascades, and flow for long distances through cañons of immense depth. They are not navigable with safety except in their lower courses.

An interesting historical coincidence connected with these river systems relates to the territorial expansion of the United States. Upper Louisiana comprised the valley of the Missouri and its tributaries. A large part of the cession from Mexico lay in the valley of the Colorado. Oregon comprised the watershed of the Columbia with limited territory besides. It is a pleasing reflection that these extensive regions, embracing conditions so various, and even civilization so unlike, have fallen, in the process of time, under one government; and that, as these rivers find their sources among the same perennial snows, so the communities that dwell in their valleys look to a common fountain head for the blessings of national life.

In the business of the fur trade the fields of operation of the several companies conformed in a broad sense to the natural divisions of the country based upon these drainage systems. The Missouri Fur Company and its successor, the American Fur Company, confined their business mainly to the watershed of the Missouri. The Rocky Mountain Fur Company had its center of operations in the valley of Green river, but its parties frequented also the headwaters of the Missouri and Columbia and the valley of Great Salt Lake. The British fur companies west of the mountains occupied the watershed of the Columbia. The Santa Fe traders operated in the Arkansas and Rio Grande valleys.

To the individual trapper the innumerable ramifications of these streams were a familiar field of labor. It was his duty to seek them out and explore them for beaver. In carrying out this duty during two score years it may be doubted if there was a rivulet in all the mountains, capable of sustaining a beaver family, that he did not visit. He was acquainted with all the sources of all the rivers in the trans-Mississippi region, and many a stream which is unknown and unvisited today was a familiar haunt to him.

THE MISSOURI SYSTEM.

Both in its physical characteristics and in its eventful history, the Missouri river must be ranked as one of the most remarkable streams upon the globe. Its source is farther from the sea than that of any other, the distance from the head of Red Rock creek, the upper course of Jefferson Fork, to the Gulf of Mexico being 4,221 miles. Of this distance 398 miles is above the mouth of the Jefferson, 2,547 miles is in the Missouri proper from Three Forks to the mouth, and 1,276 miles is in the Mississippi. The total length of the Mississippi river is 2,553 miles, half of which is on each side of the mouth of the Missouri. It thus appears that the Missouri river is longer than the entire Mississippi and more than twice as long as that part of the latter stream above the junction of the two. This fact has led to the frequent observation that the name which applies to the lower course of the Mississippi ought to have followed the Missouri.[1]

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[1] From this very general view there is excellent reason to dissent. It is not clearly a logical rule that the name of a stream should follow the longest tributary. The size and importance of a river may be more rationally gauged by the volume of flow than by the length of channel. From this point of view the Ohio has the strongest claim to the name and the Missouri the weakest, for the latter stream discharges less water than either of the others. But there are other reasons why neither the length of the stream nor the volume of flow should

From the Three Forks the Missouri flows almost due north to the junction of a large stream from the west, the Marias river. In this distance it passes through the celebrated "Gates of the Mountains," a stupendous cañon of vertical walls about eighty miles below the Forks. One hundred and fifty miles farther down it flows over a succession of cataracts known as the Great Falls of the Mis-

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in this case control, and why the name as it actually applies is exactly right. The Mississippi river flows nearly south through its entire course; it is obviously the trunk stream and all others merely laterals. It divides the country into two great sections, the east and the west. On one side the streams come mainly from the Alleghenies, on the other side from the Rockies. The Mississippi is the great central water course which gathers up the drainage from both sides and conveys it to the sea. Political divisions are based upon it. For almost its entire length it is a boundary between states. The phrases "trans-Mississippi" and "beyond the Mississippi," so well established in our national literature, would have no meaning if either of the great tributaries carried the name. In fact the naming of this stream is one of those striking instances where the common sense of the multitude is better than the wisdom of the wise, for no doubt if the matter had been left to some learned geographer or society of savants the name would have been placed on the Missouri river to the perpetual inconvenience of future generations.

The first known reference to this stream was by Marquette, who saw it in 1673. Upon a crude sketch which he made of the country through which he passed, the Missouri river appears under the name of Pekittanoui. In the region whence it was supposed to flow, were noted the names of several tribes of Indians and among them the Oumessourit tribe which lived nearest the mouth, though some distance from it. From this tribe, at an early date, the river came to be known. The name passed through nearly every combination of its letters which the eccentricity of orthographers could devise, but had settled down to its present form before the close of the eighteenth century. The word seems indubitably to have meant, as applied to the Indian tribe, *Living at the Mouth of the Waters*. Their own name for their tribe was Ne-o-ta-cha (Say) and had the same signification. The most probable theory is that the word Missouri or *Oumessourit* was the equivalent or translation of this name by some other tribe or nation, probably the Illinois, from whom it passed to the French. There seems to be no foundation for the popular notion that the name is simply characteristic, and means *Muddy Water*.

souri, which extends for a distance of eight miles and includes four distinct cataracts and many rapids, the total fall in the whole distance being over 500 feet. The Lower or Great Fall is truly the Niagara of the West, and ranks among the world's greatest cataracts; but owing to its remote situation it will probably never receive the homage from the lovers of nature that it deserves. On the other hand, if developments now in progress continue, the mighty power of these falls will yet be harnessed effectually into the service of man.

About thirty-seven miles below the Great Falls, or two hundred and twenty-four miles below the Three Forks, is the head of navigation on the Missouri, distant 2,285 miles from the sea. Its elevation above sea level is 2,565 feet, nearly half a mile. From this point the river descends like an interminable winding staircase to the level of the sea, and with so gentle a slope that great boats can ascend it the entire distance.

The locality at the mouth of the Marias river was a place of much importance in the fur trade. At this point the Missouri abandons its northerly course and turns completely to the eastward. This was the center of the Blackfoot territory and here was established the first successful trading post among those Indians, from which, after many changes, sprang the celebrated Fort Benton, perhaps the best known post upon the river.

From the mouth of the Marias the general course of the river is eastward for several hundred miles, flowing within a hundred miles of the British boundary all the way. On the north it receives the waters of Milk river and on the south those of the Musclesbell, the only two considerable tributaries above the Yellowstone and these important in length rather than volume of flow.

At the distance of 786 miles below the Three Forks is the mouth of the Yellowstone river, the largest tributary of the Missouri. The confluence of these two streams was one of the most important situations in the West, not only during

SURVIVING BASTION OF OLD FORT BENTON

the fur trade era, but through the entire period of frontier history. Commanding as it did the commerce of both streams at a time when all trade of that region followed the river valleys, it possessed an importance which in modern times it has completely lost. Here stood the greatest of the American Fur Company's posts, Fort Union, where transpired many stormy events during the more than thirty years of its existence. It was in the country of the Assiniboine Indians, but many other tribes also made it their principal center of trade.

The Yellowstone river is one of the most noted rivers on the continent. It is not only a great river, in itself worthy of high comparison, but it comes from a region which in recent times has acquired celebrity throughout the world as that singular place where nature seems to be still engaged in finishing the work of manufacturing a planet. The river comes mainly in its upper course from the Yellowstone National Park. It flows through the beautiful Yellowstone Lake, over the Great Falls, and through the Grand Cañon, and exhibits within a distance of fifty miles a combination of grandeur and beauty unparalleled upon any other river in the world.

From its source it flows north a hundred and fifty miles to the Great Bend of the Yellowstone, where it turns abruptly to the east. It then flows nearly due east for about a hundred miles, when it turns gradually to the north and finally flows northeast to its junction with the Missouri. It receives no tributaries worthy of mention from the north, but many important ones from the other side. Of these the principal one is the Bighorn river, which, in its upper course, bears the name of Wind river.

The valley of this stream throughout its entire length was a popular one with the fur companies. It was the home of the Crow tribe of Indians, a splendid fur-bearing country, and was always much frequented by trappers. It drained the Absaroka mountains on the west through the Grey Bull and Stinkingwater [2] rivers, and the Bighorn mountains on the east; while its upper course gathered up the waters from the northern slopes of the Wind River mountains. The region at the mouth of the Bighorn was long the site of a trading post, which was moved here and there at different times to satisfy the whims of the Indians.

Below the mouth of the Bighorn, the Rosebud and Tongue rivers bring down the waters from the northern slopes of the Bighorn mountains, and still farther down, the important stream of Powder river comes in with the drainage of nearly the whole eastern slope of that range. The valley of the upper course of Powder river was a favorite wintering ground for the trappers on account of the abundance of game and pasturage to be found there.

From the mouth of the Yellowstone the Missouri flows at first in a general eastern course, but trends gradually in a southerly direction until it arrives at the site of the old Mandan villages, where it turns completely to the south. In this distance of 255 miles the only tributary of any note is the Little Missouri, a long but unimportant stream from the south which rises west of the Black Hills in Wyoming.

The locality of the old Mandan villages has been known to white men for one hundred and sixty years, and has ever since been an important situation. Hither came De la Verendrye in the years about 1740 on his uncertain course toward the Western Ocean. The location is near the British line and was easily reached from the Red river settlements—a fact which gave it great importance in those times when British influence was a formidable menace upon our border. It was at this point that Lewis and Clark passed the winter of 1804 and 1805. Trading posts were established here at an early date and continued until they were superseded by the military posts and Indian agencies of later times.

From the site of the Mandan villages the Missouri pursues a southerly course, with a slight trend to the east, to the site of old Fort Pierre and the modern city of Pierre, the capital of South Dakota. In this distance of nearly three hundred and fifty miles no tributaries of moment come in from the east. On the west there are several streams of great length but little volume, of which the principal ones are the Heart, Cannon Ball, Grand, Moreau, and Cheyenne rivers, the last being the largest and most important. The two forks of the Cheyenne, which unite in the main river just east of the Black Hills, completely encircle that mass of mountains. Their junction was an important trading center for the Indian bands in that vicinity.

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[2] By recent enactment the Legislature of Wyoming has changed the name of this river to Shoshone.

With the possible exception of the site of Fort Union the position of Fort Pierre was the most important upon the upper river. It was in the heart of the Sioux country and controlled the trade of the numerous bands of Indians belonging to that tribe. It was at an angle in the course of the stream where its direction changed from south to southeast and was nearer than any other point on the river to old Fort Laramie on the Platte. It therefore commanded all of the trade of the Black Hills and much of that from the upper Platte valley.

The course of the Missouri below Fort Pierre is southeast to the mouth of the Niobrara, thence due east nearly to the mouth of the Big Sioux river, and thence slightly east of south to the mouth of the Platte. Of the tributary waters received in this distance, the Teton, White, and Niobrara on the west are the most important. The Teton came in near the site of Fort Pierre and trading posts belonging to one company or another stood near its mouth during the entire period of the fur trade. The river was familiarly known down to 1830 as the Little Missouri. After that period it was long known as the Teton; but now the name Bad river seems to have become a fixture.

White river flowed through the desolate Bad Lands of South Dakota and its valley was the route of travel between Pierre and Laramie.

The Niobrara rises far west at the southern base of the

Black Hills and enters the Missouri at the northeast corner of the modern state of Nebraska. It is, in its lower course, a strong swift stream, and was always known, until recent years, by its French name, *L'Eau qui Court*, or simply as the *Qui Court*.[3] This stream, like those just mentioned, had trading posts upon its borders.

On the east shore the most considerable tributaries are the James[4] or Dakota river, the Vermilion, and the Big Sioux. The James is a very lengthy stream which flows from north to south across both Dakotas, but carries a comparatively small volume of water. In its valley an extensive trade was carried on in fur trading times.

At the mouth of the Vermilion stood a considerable trading post and on the Big Sioux there was another though less important one.

The neighborhood of the mouth of the Platte river early acquired and has always held great prominence as a commercial center. Many trading establishments and two or three military posts have been built here and now two flourishing cities with numerous smaller towns have taken their place. The situations of these several establishments were a little above the mouth of the Platte, but it was undoubtedly the junction of that stream with the Missouri which controlled their location. The local trade here was principally with the Omahas, Iowas, Otoes, and Pawnees, in addition to which there was an extensive outfitting trade for expeditions to Oregon and the Far West.

The mouth of the Platte river was, in these early days, the division point between the upper and lower Missouri. So important a landmark was it then considered that the voyageurs came to treat it as the Equator of the Missouri, and it was a regular thing to subject the uninitiated to the rude jokes which are familiar to the navigator upon the high seas as an incident of crossing the "line."

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[3] The translation of this name, Running Water, is still retained on the upper course of the Niobrara, but curiously enough, where the river is a sluggish stream and has none of the characteristics that gave rise to the name.

[4] James river, or "The Jim" as it is more commonly called, or again, the Dakota, was always known to the traders as the *Rivière à Jacques*, often written *Au Jacques*, and even *O Jacques*. The name was given for one of the earliest traders who frequented the valley.

Of all the tributaries of the Missouri the Platte[5] is the most remarkable and interesting, and is surpassed in size, though not in length, by the Yellowstone alone. The extreme length of the Platte is about a thousand miles. Its two branches, the North and South, rise respectively in North and South Parks of the state of Colorado. The North Fork flows nearly north into central Wyoming, where it turns to the east by a gradual curve, passing through a sublime and beautiful cañon of red sandstone, when, gently turning to the right, it takes a southeasterly course into the state of Nebraska. The South Fork descends abruptly from the mountains in an easterly direction and then flows north for a considerable distance along their eastern base, past the site of the city of Denver, after which it turns to the northeast and joins the larger fork at the site of the modern town of North Platte in Nebraska. Thence the united streams pursue an easterly course to the Missouri river.

The principal tributaries of the North Fork are the Sweetwater and the Laramie rivers.[6] The Sweetwater joins the main river where the latter makes its great bend to the east. It is a very notable stream in that its course was followed by the old Oregon Trail from Independence Rock near its mouth to South Pass at its source. The Laramie was an important stream in the fur trade era, for near its mouth were the trading establishments of Fort John and Fort Platte, which were later succeeded by Fort Laramie, the most famous military post on the frontier.

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[5] The name Platte is characteristic and arises from the extremely shallow character of the stream. Its use dates from 1739. In that year two brothers, Mallet, with six companions, undertook to reach Santa Fe from a point on the Missouri somewhere near the present site of Sioux City. They left the river on the 29th of May and arrived at the Platte June 2. ("*Le 2 Juin ils tombèrent sur une rivière qu'ils nommèrent la Rivière Plate.*" De Margry.) The party ascended the main stream and the South Fork to the mountains and reached Santa Fe on the 22nd of July.

[6] For origin of these two names, see Part II., Chapter XXVI.

The South Fork of the Platte received many tributaries from the mountains, among them the Big Thompson, the St. Vrain, and the Cache à la Poudre. The locality of the mouths of these streams was likewise important in fur trade history, there having been no fewer than three trading posts established there.

The Platte proper is one of the most extraordinary of rivers. Its fall is very rapid, and its bed being composed of fine sand, one would expect that the rapid current would erode a deep channel through it. No such result, however. The broad bed of the river stands almost on a level with the surrounding country, while the water flows back and forth in such sinuous and irregular courses as to increase in a marked degree the length of the channel. The sand washed up in one place is dropped in another and the bed is built up as fast as it is cut down. Thus it results that so unresisting a material as fine sand withstands the action of the current better than a harder material, for it is certain that if this river with its heavy fall were flowing over solid rock it would have carved out a deep and cañon-like bed.

To see the Platte in all its glory one must see it during the spring floods. Then it spreads over its entire bed, upwards of a mile wide, and rivals the Mississippi itself in pretentiousness of appearance. But one has only to look a little closely to see through the thin veneer of this imposing appearance, and to discover, instead of a deep and powerful volume of water, sand bars innumerable, which show their glossy backs above the water and disclose the deceptive character of the stream. Irving very aptly characterized the Platte as "the most magnificent and the most useless of rivers," and a modern satirist has described it as a river "a thousand miles long and six inches deep."

The navigation of such a stream was of course largely out of the question. Bullboats, or flatboats made of buffalo hide, have descended from above Fort Laramie, but where one such attempt has succeeded, probably ten have failed. From the mouth of the Loup Fork of the Platte near where the Pawnee villages were located boats did frequently descend the short distance to the Missouri with the trade of those Indians.

Despite its uselessness as a stream the Platte has won a permanent place in the history of the West. If boats could not navigate its channel, the "prairie schooner" could sail along its valley, where lay the most practicable route across the plains. It led the overland traveler by gradual and imperceptible ascents from near the level of the ocean to the very summit of the Continental Divide. Along it lay the old Oregon Trail, most famous of the overland highways, and along the main river in modern times was built the first transcontinental railroad.[7]

From the mouth of the Platte river the Missouri continues its course slightly east of south to the mouth of the Kansas river, the site of the modern Kansas City. This is the seventh important locality on the course of the stream at which it is worth while to pause. The river here turns abruptly to the east, and holds its course for nearly four hundred miles to its junction with the Mississippi. At this important bend travelers to Santa Fe or the mountains left the river. It was the eastern terminus of the Oregon and Santa Fe Trails and became the principal outfitting point for the entire West. Near by stood the military post of Fort Leavenworth, while the small towns of Independence and Westport became the progenitors of the modern Kansas City.

The Kansas, or Kaw, river, which joins the Missouri from the west at Kansas City, is a large and important tributary. It rises in eastern Colorado and flows eastward through the entire state of Kansas. Its two tributaries are the Republican and Smoky Hill rivers, of which the first flows for a considerable distance through southern Nebraska. In the valley of the Kansas river dwelt a tribe of Indians of the same name, for whose accommodation a trading post was long maintained about ten miles above the mouth.

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[7] However useless the river Platte may seem to have been in its earlier history, it has been utilized to a remarkable degree in later times for irrigation, and it is not improbable that in the course of time its entire flow will be drawn out upon the neighboring lands.

Between Kansas City and the mouth of the Missouri there are several tributaries, but only one of any importance in the present connection. This is the Osage river, which comes in from the southwest a little below the present site of Jefferson City, Mo., and along the valley of which dwelt the powerful tribe of the Osage Indians. Lieutenant Pike ascended this stream on his famous Southwestern expedition in 1806.

The eighth and last important locality on the course of the Missouri is that near the mouth of the stream. Here was the city of St. Louis, the principal fur trading mart in the United States and the base of operations for the entire Western country. Its history and its relation to the fur trade have been fully noted in another place.

The physical characteristics of the Missouri river over the navigable portion of its length are the same as those of the lower Mississippi. For nearly the whole distance below Fort Benton it flows through a valley built up from alluvial deposits, with nothing like a hard or rocky bed to hold it in place. The fall is rapid, the current swift, and the soft banks are therefore always undergoing erosion. The shoreline here recedes and there advances as the earth which falls into the stream in one place is dropped in extensive bars in another. At certain seasons this action is rapid and destructive and hundreds of acres in a single locality are frequently washed away in the course of a few days.

The river naturally develops a succession of bends which are often very pronounced. In many instances the opposite portions of these bends approach very close to each other, so that while the river distance around may be several miles, the distance across may be only a few hundred feet. In time this narrow neck is cut through, a large body of land is transferred to the other shore, and the old bend becomes another of those crescent shaped lakes which abound throughout the valley. Thus the channel of the river is ever migrating from one side of the valley to the other, changing its length, readjusting its slopes, destroying extensive and fertile bottoms, building up new land, and giving rise to never-ending disputes in the ownership and jurisdiction of property. In recent years the government has undertaken to harness this refractory stream, for now that farms and cities line its course, these destructive raids are becoming an evil that has to be attended to. The problem, however, is one not easy to solve and it will be generations yet before the river is imprisoned within fixed limits.

A river whose bed is composed of sand or alluvium can not have a clear current. That of the Missouri always has a muddy appearance and in seasons of high water the amount of sediment which it carries is very great. The current has no uniform or regular flow, but is everywhere whirling and boiling in ceaseless internal commotion. The bottom has no stability. It is a mass of moving sand drifts which are building here and washing away there and shifting their position continually. The navigator can never tell where the channel will be twenty-four hours ahead. The constant cutting of banks fills the bed of the river with fallen trees which are drawn along by the powerful current until they become anchored in the bottom, forming the most dangerous obstacles to navigation. These obstacles are called snags and sawyers, or sometimes "breaks," from the appearance which they produce where they lie a little beneath the surface. They come almost entirely from cottonwood trees.

The newly formed lands along the river bottoms are generally covered with willows which often attain considerable size. Their growth is of astonishing rapidity, and scarcely is a new sand bar formed and uncovered by the water, when the thick, tender crop is seen shooting vigorously upward. As these willows are extensively used in regulating works on the river, it seems as if nature, in giving this stream its wild and unruly character, has provided the means ready at hand by which it may be placed under control.

Of all the Western rivers the Missouri was by far the most important to the trader. It would be impossible to estimate the great amount of business that has been transacted upon it, or the strange and unusual adventures it has witnessed. Its navigation is a science by itself. As a business it has now wholly passed away, but its record will survive as one of the most important chapters in the history of the West.

PLAINS RIVERS.

Under this title will be briefly described two characteristic streams of the arid region of the Southwest: the Arkansas and its tributaries and the Rio Grande. The Red river lies between them, but it plays very little part in the operations of the fur trade.

The most striking characteristics of the plains streams are their great length and comparatively small drainage area. The Canadian branch of the Arkansas, for example, through the five hundred miles of its course has a watershed which averages scarcely fifty miles wide. The same is true of the North Canadian and the Cimarron. Even in a humid climate these streams would be small in comparison to their length. In a region where rain rarely falls, most of them are totally dry for considerable distances and long periods. The water which flows from the mountains is not sufficient to overcome the seepage and evaporation on the plains in the dry season and even the main Arkansas is a very small stream in its course through western Kansas and eastern Colorado.

The Arkansas is the best type of the plains streams as well as the most important in this section of the country. It was often spoken of in early times as the "River of the Plains." Only that portion which lies above the mouth of the Canadian is of interest in connection with the fur trade. Below this point the river enters the humid belt and takes its character almost entirely from the local drainage. In fact if the upper two-thirds of its course were wiped out of existence, the difference could scarcely be noted at the mouth of the stream.

The sources of the Arkansas are in the Rocky mountains to the westward of Pike's Peak. This part of its course is full of magnificent scenery, most of which is now accessible by means of the Colorado railroads.

The Arkansas river bore the unique distinction among Western streams of being an international boundary. Prior to the war with Mexico it was the frontier between the United States and that country from the 100th meridian to its source. This fact gave it an artificial importance which it in no way possessed as a natural water course.

For about one hundred miles west from the Great Bend of the Arkansas, the main line of the old Santa Fe Trail followed the north bank of the river, while a branch of the Trail followed it to the foot of the mountains. The upper course of the Arkansas was a great resort for traders and trappers and here arose the well-known Bent's fort which held commercial sway for many years over the surrounding country.

The Cimarron river is important as being on the line of the Santa Fe Trail, which followed its course for nearly ninety miles. It was generally dry, but there were two or three permanent springs which came to be well known, and marked the stages of the journey as effectively as do the oases of an eastern desert. The country bordering the valley was of a desert character and was infested with bands of hostile Indians. It was the scene of much suffering and frequent loss of life during the Santa Fe trade.

The Canadian rises in the mountains northeast of Santa Fe and is here a strong, full stream, but it quickly loses this character when it gets well away from the hills. In its upper course it flows for a long distance through a reddish soil which imparts its color to the water. This circumstance, coupled with the general trend of the valley and its correspondence with what was known of the Red river of the Natchitoches, led to a mistaken identity of the two streams.

Down to the year 1820 the Canadian was always supposed to be the upper course of Red river. Under this assumption Major Long in that year descended the former stream on his intended exploration of the sources of the latter. It was not until he had reached the lower valley of the Canadian that he discovered the error under which geograers, travelers, and the local Spanish authorities had hitherto labored — an error which had become the more firmly fixed in geography from having the sanction of that eminent authority on New Spain, the Baron von Humboldt.

The Red river lies south of the Canadian and empties into the Mississippi in latitude 31°, being the most southern of the great western tributaries of that stream. Its sources do not extend beyond the boundaries of Texas. The name Red, or its Spanish equivalent, was applied in these early days to a great number of streams, and it was only by adding some qualifying descriptive that the particular river meant could be understood. Thus the Red river here considered was then known as the Red river of the Natchitoches. As geographical nomenclature has become more established other names have been given to most of these streams, and the name Red river, as applied in this section of the country, is now restricted to the great southern tributary of the Mississippi.

The Rio Grande below El Paso forms the boundary between Mexico and the United States. This part of the river, which was formerly more commonly known as the Rio Bravo, lies entirely outside the field of the American fur trade. Above El Paso the river came almost directly from the north and was called the Rio Grande del Norte.

The Rio Grande was a typical plains river — a bold, dashing stream where it descended from the mountains, but utterly insignificant in its lower course except in seasons of flood. In ordinary times it could not so much as float a canoe, for in parts of its course it flowed almost entirely underground, and today it is incapable of furnishing the water required for the irrigation of the neighboring country.

The valley of the Rio Grande above Santa Fe is one of great beauty, particularly in those localities where it expands into open prairies like the San Luis Valley. In its upper course it was a great resort for the trapper and it was from this section that the ancient overland trail started for southern California.

The chief importance of the Rio Grande valley lay in its connection with the Santa Fe trade, which was so long maintained between the frontier settlements of the United States and Mexico. It was here that were located the historic villages of Santa Fe and Taos — one the capital and chief town of northern Mexico, and the other its northernmost settlement.

CHAPTER IV.

RIVERS AND LAKES.

THE COLORADO AND COLUMBIA SYSTEMS
AND
THE GREAT BASIN.

The Colorado of the West — Its cañons — Its name — Green river — Its tributaries — Grand river — The lower Colorado — Snake river — Its source — Physical characteristics — Lower course — Tributaries — The upper Columbia — Historical importance of the Columbia — The name "Oregon" — The Great Basin — Great Salt Lake — Its tributaries — Its history — Sevier Lake — Humboldt river and lake — Other features of the Great Basin — Political boundaries.

THE COLORADO SYSTEM.

THE Colorado with its tributaries forms one of the most remarkable river systems on the globe — remarkable in its magnificent mountain sources, in its cañons of unsurpassed and unapproachable grandeur, and in the strange and forbidding country through which it flows, carrying the chill waters of a northern clime to the burning shores of a tropical sea. It is preëminently a system of cañon rivers. No other known stream can approach it in this regard. From the point where Green river enters the Flaming Gorge at the southern boundary of Wyoming to the lower end of the Grand Cañon of the Colorado, a distance of upwards of a thousand miles, ninety per cent at least of the channel length lies in the bottom of cañons whose walls vary in height from a few hundred to several thousand feet. In some places the walls recede in successive terraces, in others they are nearly vertical, while the swift river follows its devious course at almost unfathomable distance below, hidden from view, and practically shut out from the light of day. All the tributaries of this stream likewise flow through cañons, whose majesty and beauty are excelled only by those of the main stream itself.[1]

Of the tributaries of the Colorado, the Green river, which is really the main stream, is the largest. Coming down to the west from the Wind River mountains, where it is fed by lakes of Alpine magnitude and splendor, it turns nearly due south and holds this direction until it crosses the southern boundary of Wyoming. The upper course of Green river was a great place of rendezvous for the traders and trappers. Here Bonneville built his "Fort Nonsense" and here the Rocky Mountain and American Fur Companies assembled annually for many years to transact the business of the mountains. All of the tributary streams, and there were hundreds of them, abounded in beaver, the valleys were frequented by buffalo, and all the conditions were present to make it a veritable paradise for the fur trader.

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[1] The earliest use of the name Colorado, as applied to this river, has not come to the author's notice. It is of course very ancient as American history goes, and only an intimate acquaintance with early Spanish manuscripts of the northern provinces of New Spain could settle the question. For a time the name applied to the whole river, but now only to that portion below the junction of the Green and Grand. That part of the stream now called the Green river was very commonly known, down to 1840, as the *Seeds-kee-dee,* or prairie hen river. It generally so appears in the literature and correspondence of the times. The name Green river began to come into general use about 1833, although it dates back as far as 1824. Its origin is uncertain. Bancroft says it was given for one of Ashley's men, but it certainly was in use before Ashley was in the country, for William Becknell has left a narrative of a trip that he made from Santa Fe to Green river in 1824, and the name was evidently a fixture at that time among the Spanish. Fremont says that it was the "Rio Verde of the Spaniards" and adds that "the refreshing appearance of the broad river, with its timbered shores and green wooded islands, in contrast to its dry sandy plains, probably obtained for it the name of Green river." This does not seem unreasonable, although some who are well acquainted with the characteristics of the river are more inclined to attribute the name to the appearance of the water, which is a very pronounced green, than to the foliage of the valley, which is in no marked degree different from that along other streams in this locality.

At the time that Ashley and his men entered the valley of Green river in 1824 it was supposed to flow into the Gulf of Mexico. Various hints in the correspondence of the times show this to be the case, and it is averred even that General Ashley thought so when he started to descend the river in a canoe in 1825. It is certain, however, that the Astorians understood the identity of the stream in 1811-12 for they called it the "Colorado or Spanish" river. (See *Missouri Gazette,* May 15, 1813.)

In its course through western Wyoming Green river receives many important tributaries, nearly all of which still retain the names given them by the parties of General Ashley between 1824 and 1830. On the east the two largest are the New Fork and the Big Sandy, both of which rise in the Wind River mountains. New Fork drains a large section of the mountains and is a fine, bold stream. The origin of its name is uncertain. The Big Sandy, so called from the character of the country in its lower course, was on the line of the Oregon Trail for part of its length, and one of its branches flowed out of South Pass.

On the west there are twelve considerable tributaries from the state of Wyoming. Horse creek, near the upper end of the valley, where so many annual rendezvous were held, received its name from the circumstance that Thomas Fitzpatrick was robbed of his horses there by the Crow Indians in 1824. La Barge creek was named for the father of Captain Joseph La Barge, the well-known Missouri river pilot and boat owner. Fontenelle creek was named for Lucien Fontenelle, who was later a leader of the mountain expeditions of the American Fur Company. Black Fork, a large mountain stream, and its tributary, Ham's Fork, were well known to the trappers. Both names date from Ashley's time, but it is uncertain for whom they were given. Henry Fork is believed to be named for Andrew Henry, whose name the north fork of Snake river also bears.

Soon after Green river crosses the southern boundary of Wyoming it turns abruptly to the east and flows in that direction for about sixty miles into the northwest corner of

Colorado. Along the lower portion of this course was situated the valley of Brown's Hole. After leaving this beautiful valley the river turns abruptly to the southwest, rounding the Uintah range, and then pursues its course for several hundred miles, trending more and more to the south, until it is joined by the Grand river, the two together forming the Colorado.

The course of Green river over this distance is through a succession of cañons, and only in a few places does it come out into open country where an easy approach may be had to its banks. The most important of these openings is where the Denver and Rio Grande railroad now crosses, and where the old Spanish trail from Abiquiu, New Mexico, to Los Angeles, California, crossed in the early part of the century.

The largest tributaries from the east along this stretch of the river are the Yampah or Bear and the White river which drain a large section of northwestern Colorado. The headwaters of these streams were good trapping territory and on an upper tributary of the Yampah the trader Henry Fraeb once had a post.

On the west the Uintah river is considerably the largest tributary between Henry Fork and the mouth of the Grand. It drains the southern slopes of the Uintah mountains and was a splendid trapping country. For many years the trader Robidoux maintained a post on its banks. Price river valley has been utilized in modern times to carry the railroad up the slopes of the Wasatch range. San Rafael river, which also rises in the Wasatch mountains, is the last considerable tributary of Green river.

Grand river, the great eastern tributary of the Colorado of the West, lies almost entirely in the state of Colorado, and drains fully one-quarter of the mountain area of the state. The main stream rises in Middle Park, Colorado, between the sources of the North and South Platte. It flows through a series of magnificent cañons, and several open valleys, which were once barren, but are now converted by modern enterprise into prosperous fruit farms. The principal tributary of Grand river is the Gunnison, which comes in from the south and joins the main stream a few miles east of the Colorado-Utah line.[2] It is a large and important stream, and its valley abounds in sublime and beautiful scenery.

The watershed of the Grand river was all good trapping territory, although not so much frequented by the traders as were the streams farther north. Only one post seems to have existed in the entire valley and that was Robidoux's post on the Gunnison, at the mouth of the Uncompahgre, its principal southern tributary.

The Colorado river proper below the confluence of the Green and Grand has but little connection with the history of the fur trade. The physical character of the country precluded access to the river for the greater part of its length until it emerged from the Grand Cañon near the mouth of the Virgin river. By that time it was in a latitude where the trapping business was no longer profitable. Most of its tributaries, likewise, along this stretch of the river, were shut in between the walls of deep cañons and, like the main stream, were inaccessible. However interesting and attractive this region may now be to lovers of natural scenery, it was not so to the people of the fur trade, and was but little frequented by them.

The only tributary of the Colorado from the west that will here be referred to is the Virgin river, which drains a large section of southern Utah and enters the main stream near the point where it turns to the south after its westwardly course through the Grand Cañon. In 1826 Jedediah S. Smith named it Adams river for the President. Its present name would seem to be of Spanish origin, although there is a suggestion of a possible origin in the fact that the name of one of Smith's men, who passed along the stream and was later killed in California, was Thomas Virgin.

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[2] As late as the era of the Pacific railroad surveys, the name Grand river was used to describe the southern branch, now called the Gunnison. After Captain Gunnison's exploration of the valley of the latter stream and his tragic death in 1853 his name was given to the tributary, while the name Grand became permanently fixed on the main stream. The latter was, prior to this time, called Blue river, but this name is now applied to the stream which drains the valley comprised in the modern Summit County of Colorado.

Of the eastern tributaries the Rio San Juan, the Little Colorado, and the Gila are most important. The latter stream, which enters the Colorado at the southern boundary of the United States, has an extensive watershed including all of southern Arizona and southwestern New Mexico. It was too far south to be of any importance in the fur trade.

THE COLUMBIA SYSTEM.

The sources of the Snake, the south fork of the Columbia, are inextricably interlaced with those of the Missouri, Yellowstone, and Green rivers. The principal branch comes from the Yellowstone Park, where it drains Shoshone, Lewis and Heart lakes, which lie just across the Divide from Yellowstone Lake. Flowing south from the Park, it skirts the eastern base of the Teton range, passing through Jackson Lake and Jackson Hole, and finally, after rounding the southern extremity of the range in a deep and rugged cañon, it turns off to the northwest. In its course of fifty miles along the base of the Tetons it receives great accessions from the east, the principal tributaries being Buffalo Fork, Grosventre and Hoback rivers. Just at the point where it crosses the state line between Wyoming and Utah it receives two more large tributaries from the south, the Salt and John Day rivers.[8]

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[8] It is unfortunate that modern geography has made a mistake in perpetuating the name of this stream. It should be John Gray. There was a John Gray in the Hudson Bay Company service under Alexander Ross, and a person by the same name, but whether the same individual or not is uncertain, in the American Fur Company's service between 1830 and 1835. Both John Grays (if different individuals) were distinguished hunters, and from one of them came the name Gray's Hole

The Snake follows its course to the northwest for upward of a hundred miles, when it is joined by a tributary of almost equal magnitude from the north. This is Henry Fork of Snake river, which rises in Henry Lake, just across the Divide from Red Rock Lake, the source of Jefferson Fork of the Missouri. Before it reaches the main Snake it is augmented by an important tributary from the southeast, the Teton or Pierre river, which drains the valley of Pierre's Hole, at the western base of the Teton range.

From the junction of the two branches of the Snake, the main stream flows at first directly south. It has now acquired those peculiar qualities which give it a distinct character among the streams of the West. Starting from the same elevation as does the Missouri, and reaching the sea in half the distance, it is much more rapid and torrential than the eastern stream. It flows with a strong current almost from the start, and its dark, gloomy waters, moving here in silent but dreadful power, there in loud and violent impetuosity, breathe danger and treachery at every step. Many indeed have been the lives lost in its uncertain crossings. For a great distance in southern Idaho it flows through ancient lava fields in a narrow gorge of varying depth, and over a constant succession of rapids and cascades. In many places not even the usual trees line the water's edge, and a traveler two hundred yards away would never suspect the presence of a great river, for the narrow cleft in the even plain is quite indiscernible unless from some neighboring elevation. Through portions of this gorge the river has wrought a most weird and fantastic channel, with winding and broken shoreline and rocky islets, all black and dismal like the aspect of the surrounding country. Once in a while it comes forth from its lava prison, and, as if for joy at its temporary release, disports itself over miles of country, in many separate channels, lined with dense groves of willow and cottonwood. Its harsher char-

as applied to a valley on the stream which is now called John Day. The hunter who bore the latter name was never near this stream.

acteristics become accentuated as the river approaches the Blue mountains. It is all the way an unnavigable stream, and only at rare intervals has it been possible to establish safe ferries.

From the junction with Henry Fork to the mouth of the Salmon river, the course of the Snake is approximately that of a great semi-circle, extending southwest, west, and around to the north. It flows over three immense cataracts, the American, Shoshone, and Salmon Falls, and receives many large tributaries on either hand. Of these the more important only will be noted. The Portneuf river, so named for a Canadian trapper murdered on its banks by the Indians, comes in from the southeast about fifteen miles above the American Falls. It was an important stream in early years, for it led almost directly from the great bend of Bear river, whence the Oregon Trail passed over to the valley of the Snake. The modern railroad also follows the valley of the Portneuf. The mouth of this stream was the locality of the well-known Fort Hall, the most important trading post, and later the chief military post, of the Snake river valley.

The other tributaries on the left bank of the Snake are the Raft river, Goose creek, Salmon Falls river, and Owyhee river, which all flow nearly north. The Owyhee is a large stream, and rises as far south as northern Nevada. The Malheur, Powder, and Grande Ronde rivers collect the drainage from the eastern slopes of the Blue mountains. Nearly all of these streams were familiar to travelers along the old Oregon Trail.

On the right bank of the Snake only one important tributary, the Malade, is received until the river enters upon its long northerly course where it now forms the boundary between Idaho and Oregon. Exactly at the point where this natural boundary begins, and opposite the mouth of the Owyhee, the Boise river joins the Snake. This was an important stream. Its course was nearly due west, and the Oregon Trail followed it all the way from the modern site of Boise City to its mouth. A few miles below the confluence of the Snake and the Boise stood a Hudson Bay Company post, and at this point the Oregon Trail crossed the Snake on its way over the Blue mountains to the Columbia.

Below the Boise the principal eastern tributaries of the Snake are the Payette, Weiser, Salmon, and Clearwater rivers. The courses of the Payette and Weiser are peculiar, being nearly south, parallel to the course of the Snake, but flowing in the opposite direction. The eastern limit of their watersheds is not far distant from the parent stream.

Salmon river is a large and important stream. Its main source is in central Idaho, whence it flows north to the site of the modern Salmon City. Here it is joined by a large tributary from the southeast, the Lemhi river, which carries the western waters from the ranges along the Continental Divide between Idaho and Montana. Below the confluence of these two streams the main river takes a westerly course and flows nearly across the state to within a few miles of the Snake river. Here it turns abruptly to the north, and parallels the Snake very closely for about forty miles before it enters the main stream. The Salmon river had a notable history in the fur trade and pioneer period. Its valley was a rich trapping territory, and was the home of the Nez Perce tribe of Indians.

Clearwater river, also a large stream, and the last important tributary of the Snake, joins the latter stream where it turns from its northerly course westward toward the Columbia. Like the Salmon river, the Clearwater finds its source in the mountains along the eastern boundary of Idaho, and flows entirely across the state. It rivaled its sister to the south in its wealth of beaver fur, and its valley was likewise occupied by the Nez Perce Indians.

The course of the Snake through the range which connects the Blue mountains with those east of the river is in a cañon which ranks among the most wonderful in the world. It attains its greatest magnitude near the mouth of the

Salmon river, where both streams are in the bottoms of gorges of black volcanic rock, perhaps three thousand feet deep, through which they flow with torrential velocity, their white, foamy surface forming a marked contrast with the gloomy majesty of the walls which enclose them.

Below the mouth of the Clearwater the Snake is navigable to its outlet. It flows in a considerable curve to the north, through the region known as the Great Plain of the Columbia, and enters the latter stream three hundred and thirty-six miles from the sea.

The upper Columbia drains the territory comprised in northeastern Washington, northern Idaho, northwestern Montana, and a large part of British Columbia. It enters United States territory already a great river, swollen by the thousand streams which the lofty mountains of these northern regions afford. Its course and those of its tributaries are exceedingly irregular and broken, difficult to follow on the map, and form a striking contrast to the more regular course of the rivers east of the Divide. The region of its sources abounds in noble lakes, and the scenery is on a scale of grandeur scarcely equalled in any of the mountains to the south. It was a splendid region for the trapper, and every one of its streams yielded an annual tribute to the coffers of the Hudson Bay Company, or its predecessor in those parts, the Northwest Company. From the utmost source of the Columbia, the fur company's trail lay across the Divide to the sources of the Saskatchewan, whence it led east to the Red river valley, Lake Superior, and to Montreal.

Where the Columbia crosses the international boundary, it receives Clark's Fork from the east with the waters of northern Idaho and northeastern Montana. The valley of this stream is also a region of notable lakes, of which the principal are the Pend d'Oreille, Flathead, and Missoula, and it gives rise to hundreds of the finest streams in the mountains. It was the home of those staunch friends of the whites, the Flathead Indians, and was a favorite haunt of the hunter and trapper.

The distance on the Columbia from the mouth of Clark's Fork to the mouth of the Snake is four hundred and sixteen miles. The only notable tributary on the left or south bank is the Spokane river, an important stream on whose banks stood a trading post, Spokane House, some ten miles below the modern site of Spokane City.

The course of the Columbia, in the state of Washington, is first south one hundred and twelve miles to the mouth of the Spokane, thence slightly north of west for about one hundred miles, to where the tributary Okanagan comes in from the north. This was the site of an important trading post which accommodated the Indians dwelling in the country to the north.

From the Okanagan to the mouth of the Snake the general course of the Columbia is a little east of south. The only considerable tributary received in this distance is the Yakima, which comes in from the west with the drainage of a large extent of the Cascade range in central Washington.

From the mouth of the Snake the Columbia continues southeast for a short distance, when it turns abruptly to the right and holds a course nearly due west for about one hundred miles. At this important bend two small but notable tributaries flow in from the northern slopes of the Blue mountains. These streams, the Walla Walla and the Umatilla, are important ones in the fur trade and missionary history of Oregon. It was in this vicinity that the Oregon Trail, after crossing the Blue mountains, came to the Columbia river.

Three great tributaries join the Columbia between the Snake river and the sea, and all come in from the south. They are the John Day[4] and the Des Chutes rivers, which bring in the contributory waters of the Blue and Cascade ranges in central Oregon; and the Willamette, a large stream which is fed by both the Coast and Cascade ranges, and drains the extensive and beautiful valley between. The latter stream enters the Columbia near the site of the modern city of Portland, and opposite old Fort Vancouver, the most important locality on the Pacific slope during the fur trade era. Here the British companies had their Pacific coast establishment, and from this point they ruled as lords of the country for fully two score years.

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[4] This stream is named for the John Day who figures in the overland Astorian expedition of 1811-12.

As if deflected from its course by the impact of the Willamette, the Columbia, at its junction with this stream, turns sharply to the north and continues in this direction for about forty miles, when it swings in an easy curve to the left and holds a course due west to the ocean. For many miles above the mouth of the river it expands into a broad estuary, where ocean vessels ride in safety, and it finally enters the Pacific over what was in early times one of the most dangerous bars known to navigation.

Like all the rest of the Western country, the valley of the Columbia west of the Cascade range presented every gradation of quality from rich and fertile bottom lands to the most barren and worthless desert. Large sections of the Great Plain of the Columbia, as the region between that river and the Snake, and above their junction, is called, are fertile lands and will yield to reclamation. But in the days of the fur trade this country had no value except for grazing the few horses which were required in a business where boats were the usual means of transportation. The true trapping country was farther up, among the thousand tributaries and mountain lakes that were spread over an area four times as large as New England. All of this region ranked with that about the headwaters of the Missouri in its abundance of beaver.

The Columbia was not a navigable stream in the same sense that the Missouri was, but was subject to far greater extremes. The character of the Missouri was practically uniform from its mouth to the head of navigation, and a boat which could navigate it at its outlet could navigate it all the way. Not so with the Columbia, which, in one part of its course or another, could accommodate every known kind or size of craft, but in which the navigation was nowhere continuous for large steamboats for more than about two hundred miles. For one hundred miles above the mouth ocean vessels can pass with ease and safety. For fifty miles farther up, or to the Cascades, river boats can navigate at all seasons of the year. Here navigation was formerly completely interrupted, and the traders had to make portages, whose natural difficulty was greatly enhanced by the presence of thieving and treacherous bands of Indians. In modern times a canal eliminates this obstacle altogether. Nearly fifty miles farther up is another rapid, where the river is compressed into a narrow channel with such a turbulent current that the passage of boats in either direction is out of the question. Above the Dalles, as this place is called, the most serious obstruction is Priest rapids, but by the aid of the cordelle, portages could be avoided, and navigation was practically continuous in small craft to Boat Encampment, near the source of the river, where the British trail started for the East. It was also possible to ascend the Snake river in boats to about thirty miles above the mouth of the Clearwater.

In spite of its many rapids and the difficult portages at the Dalles and Cascades, boats were the universal means of transportation during the fur trade era from the mouth to the source of the Columbia. The lighter craft ascended the tributaries for long distances, and if the total navigable length of all these streams, as actually used by the traders, could be determined, it would be found to amount to more than two thousand miles.

The valley of the Columbia has but an incidental interest in the history of the United States fur trade. Only one important enterprise was ever undertaken there by an American company, and that was Mr. Astor's project in 1811-13. Nathaniel J. Wyeth undertook to found a business there twenty years later, but wholly without success. Jedediah S. Smith, Joshua Pilcher, and Captain Bonneville succeeded in obtaining a glimpse of the resources of the valley, but scarcely so much as carried away a beaver skin. The British companies held absolute commercial sway over that region, and its fur trade history therefore relates mainly to the history of those companies.

No river upon the continent, and few upon the globe, have held a larger place in history, considering the time that it has been known, than this "River of the West." Whether viewed by the business man or the poet, its effect upon the imagination of the pioneer was the same. One saw in its valley a land full of the possibilities of material greatness; the other a land full of the grandeur and beauty of nature and hallowed by the traditions and activities of man. Both alike, as they looked out upon the wide-spread rolling ocean beyond the headlands that guarded its entrance, felt that there were no limits to the greatness of the coming time,

"When through this gate the treasures of the North
Flow outward to the sea."[5]

The very name of the river — the original name, Oregon — was enshrined in poesy while yet the existence of the stream was an unsolved mystery. The adventures of the fur trader, the trials of the missionaries, the perils of the navigator, the sufferings of the resolute emigrant, and the political controversy of a quarter of a century, are all inseparably interwoven with its history.[6]

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[5] *Sunset at the Mouth of the Columbia.* (Mrs. Victor.)

[6] The origin of the name "Oregon" has puzzled geographers and historians as almost no other name has. It is so beautiful and sonorous and has become so deeply fixed in the popular mind that the desire to know whence it came is an unusually strong one. It was first used by Jonathan Carver in 1778, but without the slightest clue to his authority save that he received it from the Indians. But none of the tribes with which he had intercourse had any such word. There is much reason to think that it came from the Spanish. Early writers refer to it as the "Oregon of the Spaniards." One of the first, if not the first, attempts at explanation, appeared in the *Missouri Republican* of St. Louis in 1825 in which "A Subscriber" explained the origin of the name as a Spanish word "*oregano*," a plant of the wild marjoram

THE GREAT BASIN.

To the westward of the valley of the Colorado lies an immense territory with no rivers that flow into the sea. Its area is over 200,000 square miles, comprising portions

species, which was said to flourish on the banks of the river. In a subsequent issue, a person who signed himself "Patrick" took the "Subscriber" to task for being "after robbing the whole country of the best part of its name" which, he averred, was in full, Teague O'Regan, a family name in the island of Erin. Captain Bonneville thought that the *oregano* was the wild sage which grew so abundantly in portions of the valley. Other writers have sought to associate the name with the storms of the coast by deriving it from the French word *Ouragan*, hurricane. Still another explanation is that it is from the Spanish *orejon*, lop-eared, or hanging-ears, descriptive of a species of rabbit, and also of an Indian tribe found in these parts.

None of these explanations, unless possibly the first, merits serious consideration, and so the name is still wrapped in impenetrable mystery. If it was really the creation of historian or geographer who coined it from "airy nothing" and gave it "a local habitation and a name" on this most interesting river, then all praise to the genius who created it. That it was an acceptable name time has amply proven, and the circumstances of its history have endeared it to the popular mind. Bryant built it skilfully into his "Thanatopsis" where he says:

> "Lose thyself in the continuous woods
> Where rolls the Oregon and hears no sound
> Save his own dashing."

The picture was a pleasing one, "Oregon" a pleasing word, the poem a great one, and all combined to fix the name in the hearts of the people. Hall J. Kelley was, we believe, the first one to transfer it to the country drained by the river, which he did in his impassioned writings on the subject beginning about 1815. Then followed the long and bitter controversy over the "Oregon Question," at one time not very far from war, until the name became one of the most familiar in our geography. (For a careful inquiry into the origin of this name, see footnote p. 17, vol. 34, Bancroft's *History Western States*. It is by Mrs. Frances Fuller Victor, probably the ablest living authority on the history of Oregon.)

The nomenclature of the streams of the Columbia Valley, with the exception of the main river and a few of its larger tributaries, is mostly the work of the Northwest and Hudson Bay companies. Nearly all the names date from before 1820.

of California, Oregon, and Utah, and nearly all of Nevada. It is known in the geography of the United States as the Great Basin. Its most salient hydrographic feature is the Great Salt Lake, with an area of 1,700 to 2,100 square miles, according to the height of its fluctuating surface. It is a body of water without outlet and of excessively saline quality. The lake is now scarcely a tenth of its former size, for the Quaternary Lake Bonneville, as traced out by geologists, had an area of nearly 20,000 square miles, was a freshwater lake, and drained north into Snake river, making the Great Basin, geologically at least, a portion of the Columbia valley.

The tributaries of Great Salt Lake all come from the eastern shore, the country to the west being a barren, waterless waste known as the Great Salt Lake desert. The mountains to the east of the lake yield many perennial streams, such as the Bear, Ogden, and Weber rivers. Of these Bear river is the most important and is quite a large stream. Its course is peculiar. Rising on the other side of the Wasatch range, almost due east of the Great Salt Lake, it flows north through Wyoming and Utah into the state of Idaho, where it turns completely about and flows south into the lake. Bear river was an important stream in the early days, for along a portion of its valley lay the famous Oregon Trail, and this importance it retains to the present day as the route of the Oregon Short Line railroad.

Bear Lake occupied the center of a large, marshy tract which drained into Bear river a short distance west of the Wyoming boundary. It was first known to the trappers as Black Bear Lake, and later as Bear Lake. To Ashley's men in 1826 it was known as Little Lake, in distinction from the Great Lake farther west. At that time Bear river was spoken of by Ashley as "a water of the Pacific ocean."

Next to Bear river Weber river is the largest tributary of Great Salt Lake. It rises directly west of the sources of Bear river and flows northwest into the lake. Weber cañon, and the picturesque gorge along one of its branches known as Echo cañon, form an opening through the Wasatch range which was utilized by the first trans-continental railroad.

Near its mouth Weber river is joined by a tributary from the east known as Ogden river, a beautiful stream which drains that remarkable nook in the mountains, elsewhere referred to as the "Ogden's Hole" of the trappers, and now occupied in its lower portion by the city of Ogden, Utah.

The third stream of importance emptying into Great Salt Lake joins that body of water near its southeastern extremity and is known, since the Mormons settled in its valley, as Jordan river. It flows due north from another considerable lake now called Utah Lake, a body of fresh water fed by the drainage of the western slopes of the Wasatch range through nearly a degree of latitude. Provo river, Spanish Fork, and Salt creek are the principal tributaries of Utah Lake.

The early history of Great Salt Lake is intimately bound up with the history of the fur trade. There is no certain evidence that any white man ever saw the lake until the hunter and trapper came. Father Escalante, in 1776, came as far north as Utah Lake, but did not see the Great Salt Lake. On a map of North America "engraved for Guthrie's New System of Geography" in 1811, and "drawn from the best authorities," and a very good map of the known portions of the continent, there is represented a considerable lake very nearly in the same latitude and longitude as Great Salt Lake. It shows the lake without an outlet and thus avoids the error involved in the Rio Buenaventura myth, which represents the lake as flowing through a river of that name into the Pacific — an error which Captain Bonneville is generally given the credit of correcting. On this map there is no name to the lake, but instead the following legend: "Lake, etc., laid down according to Mr. Lawrence, who is said to have traveled through this country to California in 1790 and 1791." Nothing farther in this connection has come to light, but it leaves unsettled a very interesting question as to who actually first saw this lake.

The first party of white men known to have passed anywhere near the lake were the Astorians in 1811-12. The detached party left by Hunt at Fort Henry went south at least as far as to Bear river. When Stuart and Crooks returned in the summer of 1812 they met this party and were guided by Miller, one of their number, to this stream and ascended its course for a considerable distance. Although very near to the lake, there is no positive evidence that Miller's trapping party actually saw it.

It is highly probable, although here again the direct evidence is lacking, that the Northwest and Hudson Bay people saw this lake prior to 1824. Donald McKenzie worked all through the country around the headwaters of the Snake before 1820, and Ross quotes a letter written by him from "Black Bear's Lake" in 1819. It seems scarcely possible that so large a trapping party could have passed so much time in this vicinity without discovering the Great Salt Lake.

So far as indubitable proof goes, the discovery of the lake is connected with the expeditions of General William H. Ashley which penetrated these regions in 1823-6. A party of Ashley's men were encamped for the winter of 1824-5 in Cache Valley and were trapping on Bear river and its tributaries. Here a controversy arose as to the course of Bear river after it left the valley. A wager was laid and James Bridger was selected to follow the river and determine the bet. This he did, and soon arrived at its outlet in Great Salt Lake. Tasting the water he discovered it to be salt, and on reporting to his companions, all assumed that it was an arm of the Pacific ocean. But in the spring of 1825 four men in skin boats explored its shore line, and found that it had no outlet.[7]

The discovery of Great Salt Lake can therefore hardly be considered a settled question in history. It is possible that before 1824 the Spaniards may have seen it, or that white men from the eastward may have penetrated so far, or that it may have been discovered by Andrew Henry's men or by the Astorians. It is probable that it was known to the trappers of the Northwest and Hudson Bay Companies. But none of these things are as yet certainties. The situation may be concisely stated by saying, that while Bridger is the first white man whom we positively know to have seen Great Salt Lake, we do not positively know that he was the first to see it.

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[7] See Warren's *Memoir of Exploring Expeditions West of the Mississippi River.*

The essential facts in regard to Great Salt Lake, such as its location, approximate size, lack of outlet, and quality of water, were thus definitely known as early as the spring of 1825. In fact, the geographical nomenclature of the valley dates in no small degree from the Ashley expeditions, although to some extent from the Hudson Bay Company explorers. Ogden river is named of course for Peter Skeen Ogden, who came into the valley at least as early as 1825. The tributaries of Bear river, such as Tulloch's and Smith's Forks, are probably named for Samuel Tulloch and Jedediah S. Smith. The name Weber river dates from this time, but the identity of the individual for whom it was given is lost. Utah Lake was then known by its present name and Sevier Lake was called Ashley Lake. A tributary of Utah Lake is now called Provo river, and near its mouth is the modern Provo City, Utah. It was so named for Etienne Provost, who was with these expeditions and one of the most noted mountaineers of that time.[*]

To the south of the present valley of Great Salt Lake lie Sevier Lake and its long tributary, Sevier river. This valley occupies a large part of southwestern Utah and geologically is a part of old Lake Bonneville. The Sevier river rises near the southern end of the Wasatch range, flows north along the western base of these mountains for a hundred and fifty miles, and then turns southwest for about seventy-five miles into Sevier Lake. The similarity between its course and that of Bear river, the principal tributary of Great Salt Lake, is striking. Sevier Lake has no outlet and the characteristics of the Great Lake at the north are accentuated here. The water is shallow, and even before the advent of civilization a large part of the area probably became bare and covered with salt every summer from evaporation. In later times irrigation has so far absorbed the waters of the Sevier river that the lake has become practically dry.

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[*] See further, Chapter XVI., Part II.

Westward of the valley of the Great Salt Lake along the eastern base of the Sierra Nevada mountains lies another extensive section of the Great Basin. Here are many lakes, all without outlet to the ocean. Among them the more important are the Humboldt Lakes, the Carson Lakes, Walker and Pyramid Lakes, and Lake Tahoe. There are also many others extending along the base of the mountains as far north as to the present state of Oregon.

The most considerable river of this section is the Humboldt, which flows into the Humboldt lakes, or as they are often called, the sinks of the Humboldt. It takes its rise about one hundred miles west of Great Salt Lake and flows in a direction generally south of west for some three hundred miles. About midway of its course it receives a tributary from the south of considerable length but insignificant proportions. The Humboldt was long known as Ogden river, from the Peter Skeen Ogden already mentioned. Ogden married an Indian woman from one of the tribes of the valley, calling her name Mary, and from this circumstance the river was also at one time known as Mary river.* In Leonard's account of the Walker expedition in 1833, the stream is invariably called Barren river and the lakes into which it flows Battle Lakes. The name Humboldt was bestowed by Fremont, and is an instance of the violence so often done by explorers to existing geographical nomenclature without justifiable cause. The river should have retained its original name, Ogden.

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* Beckwourth connects the origin of this name with the Lewis and Clark expedition, but his theory is more absurdly impossible than are most of even *his* stories.

At the southern extremity of the Great Basin, lying mostly within the state of California, is a desolate waste which is in the most emphatic sense a desert. It is of very low altitude, some portions even lying below the level of the sea. The water which would naturally collect there is carried off by the excessive evaporation of that region. In this section are Lake Owen, Death Valley, and the sinks of the Mohave.

Only that portion of the Great Basin which lay along the western slope of the Wasatch range was much frequented by the American trapper. The Hudson Bay Company monopolized the fur business in the region to the northwest, while little was ever done by the traders in that to the southwest.[10]

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[10] This may be as suitable a place as any to note the political boundaries of the trans-Mississippi country during the period of the fur trade. The Spanish and later the Mexican line commenced at the mouth of the Sabine river and coincided with the east and northern boundary of Texas as far as to the 100th Meridian, which it followed to its intersection with the Arkansas. Ascending this stream to its source in the mountains it thence followed the 106th Meridian to its intersection with the 42nd parallel of latitude. This parallel formed the northern boundary of the Spanish possessions westward to the Pacific ocean. The British American line was the same as at present as far west as to the crest of the Rocky mountains. The disputed territory of Oregon was bounded on the north by the Russian possessions at latitude 54 degrees 40 minutes, on the east by the Continental Divide, on the south by the 42nd parallel, and on the west by the Pacific ocean.

CHAPTER V.

FLORA.

Vegetable productions of importance to the trapper — The cottonwood — The quaking aspen — The conifera — The cedar — The willow — Council Grove — The Big Timbers — The Cross Timbers — Sage brush — Greasewood — Cactus — The grasses — Wild fruits — Edible roots — The maize — Plants used for tobacco.

THE preceding pages have been devoted to a description of the topography and physical aspects of the country in which the American fur trade was carried on. It is now in order to consider, not in exhaustive technical detail, but from the practical standpoint of the hunter and trapper, the varieties of life which flourished there. The vegetable productions which had any appreciable influence upon their manner of life were very few. The woods, grasses, fruits, edible roots, the troublesome sagebrush, greasewood, and cactus, the maize, and a few domestic plants introduced by the trader, comprise the number.

The most important tree in the business of the fur trade, and in many parts of the West practically the only tree, was the cottonwood. There were several species of the genus *populus*, but the most important was the *populus deltoides occidentalis*, the broad-leaved cottonwood of the lower rivers found only along the water courses, where it grew in every variety of form and size, from diminutive, misshapen shrubs to stately trees of more than five feet diameter and upward of seventy feet high. In the higher altitudes it had a narrower leaf and was called *populus angustifolia*.

A grove of large cottonwoods, with stately trunks and widespreading tops, is not surpassed in beauty by any other variety of forest. In a region like the Western country, totally devoid of trees except high among the mountains or in the valleys of streams, the sight of these long lines of foliage was always welcome to the hunter for the comfort it promised, as it is now to the lover of nature because of the beauty which it displays.

The cottonwood was used in these early days for a variety of purposes. In the first place it was a grateful shelter both in winter and summer. It supplied the hunter with fuel for his warmth and cooking, logs for temporary huts, and food for his horse. This last use will seem surprising to many, yet it was a universal one upon the plains, where grazing was impracticable, as it often was in winter. The bark was one of the most nutritious foods. The horses liked it and throve upon it as well as upon oats. It is recorded that Kenneth McKenzie at Fort Union kept some horses of superior quality for the chase exclusively, and for their better training fed them only upon cottonwood bark.[1] Although elk and deer obtained the bark by browsing from the younger shrubs, horses, if in considerable numbers, were fed on the bark obtained from larger trees. In such cases it was customary to cut down the trees and shave the bark from them with ordinary draw knives. The shavings were then cut up into short pieces and fed to the animals. Great care was taken not to feed the bark in a frozen condition lest the sharp edges, keen as steel with frost, lacerate the horses' mouths and stomachs. Animals were occasionally lost from neglect of this precaution.

The cottonwood was extensively used in the manufacture of boats, particularly the "dugouts" or log canoes which were so much used on the Missouri and its tributaries. It likewise supplied palisades for the forts, logs for the houses, fuel for the steamboats, and every other want for which wood was required. It was usually manufactured with the axe alone, but at the larger posts there was a more complete equipment. Timber and boards were sawed by erecting a stage on which the logs were rolled, high enough so that a man could stand erect underneath. Two men then sawed the log, one standing above, the other beneath, and together operating the saw. The use of cottonwood as timber was more from necessity than on account of its quality, which was really very inferior. As a general thing it was the only timber available, the low dwarf cedar being unfit for lumber, and the pine and fir of the mountains being too far away.

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[1] "About four o'clock the horses were brought in much fatigued; on giving them meal bran moistened with water they would not eat it, but preferred the bark of the cottonwood."

Journal of Lewis and Clark.

Another species of the genus populus was the *populus tremuloides,* the quaking asp, or the *tremble* of the French. It was sometimes found in the valleys, as along the *Rivière aux Trembles,* or Poplar river, in Montana, but more generally on the mountain sides, where it grew in small, compact copses which greatly enhanced the beauty of the scenery. The superstitious voyageurs thought that this was the wood of which the Cross was made and that ever since the crucifixion its leaves have exhibited that constant tremulous appearance which has given rise to the name. The wood of the quaking asp was preferred by the trappers as a fuel for cooking, because it had little odor and did not taint the meat.

The mountains were extensively covered above an altitude of 7,000 feet, with forests of pine, spruce, balsam, and fir. The more important species were the *Pinus flexilis,* or Rocky mountain white pine; the *Pinus Murrayana* or lodge pole pine, and sometimes called black pine from its appearance in forest masses; *Picea Engelmanni,* a spruce flourishing near the timber line; *Abies Subalpina,* balsam, found near the snow fields and a very beautiful tree; and the *Pseudotsuga Douglasii,* the Douglas spruce, largest of the conifera, sometimes attaining a diameter of five feet. It was only where these forests descended into the lower valleys that they were of much use to the trapper. The pine made a good fuel and its boughs were often used for bedding. The forests also afforded shelter from storms. But as a general thing the part which they played in the hunter's life was that of an obstacle to travel. They were often very dense, difficult to pass through, with little or no game in them, and in the springtime powerful retainers of the winter snows. They delayed to a great extent the passage of the mountains in spring, and by holding the snows till the period of hot weather, increased the mountain freshets in June and contributed to render the streams more impassable.

The cedars were very numerous and grew in the widest variety of situations. The *Juniperus communis Alpina* which flourished extensively on the hillsides and the *Juniperus Virginiana,* commonly called the red cedar, were the principal varieties. The cedars of the mountains and foothills grew in the most distorted and twisted shapes as if from the long action of storms and winds. Sometimes their tops spread out into wide canopies, affording ideal spots on which to camp. For lumber, fuel, etc., they were not so useful owing to the difficulty of cutting and splitting. These trees are to be seen in any part of the West, and frequently in those barren and forbidding situations where it would seem that no life could flourish.

On some of the islands of the Missouri the red cedar flourished in great abundance and was there a most useful tree. It furnished timber for the trading posts and fuel for the steamboats. The various Cedar islands along the river, particularly those in the Sioux country, were named from the presence of this tree.

Along nearly all of the streams there were growths of willows of greater or lesser density — *Salix rostrata* is the most common of the several varieties. These often amounted to extensive thickets, almost impenetrable, making the approach to streams a matter of the greatest difficulty, while they crowded so close upon the borders that it was impossible to follow the bank. The trapper had therefore to wade the stream or betake himself to the open bottoms. These thickets were a most serious obstacle in trapping operations, but at the same time they were a source of food for the beaver and the wild game and a splendid concealment from savage foes.

Although the plains of the West and most of the foothills and bad lands were barren of trees, there were here and there extensive forest lands which came to have considerable celebrity in the life of the plains. The country around the Black Hills was an example. While much of this section was mountainous and the forests there strictly mountain forests, still the trees extended down to the very plains and far out from the base of the mountains.

On the headwaters of the Neosho was the celebrated forest of Council Grove which contained several varieties of timber. It was of great importance to the Santa Fe caravans.

The Big Timbers of the Arkansas were a large body of cottonwood on the north side of the Arkansas river, extending for several miles along the river at some distance below the site of Bent's fort. In a country almost devoid of trees, even along watercourses, this extensive forest was of more than usual importance and was a great resort for both Indians and traders.

The forest section known as the Cross Timbers lay rather outside the territory embraced in this work, being mainly in Texas and the Indian Territory, and it extended from the Brazos river northwesterly to the Canadian river. South of the Canadian a branch of the Cross Timbers extends westwardly and then northerly across the North Fork of the Canadian, where it finally disappears. This hilly, wooded section is the line between the lower well-watered prairies and the high, arid plains. It is covered with a thick growth and a wide variety of trees mostly of dwarfish, stunted size. The underwood is so overgrown with vines and shrubbery as to be in places almost impassable.

What the prairie dog was among the animals of the plain, the sage brush and greasewood were to the plants — products so generally useless that it has ever been a mystery what their purpose in the economy of nature may have been. It is an observation often made that a discovery of some beneficial use for the sage would render available vast regions of country which must otherwise apparently forever remain in a state of non-productiveness.

There are more than twenty species of the genus *artemisia.* The most common, and the one to which the term sage brush strictly applies, is the *artemisia tridentata.* The term sage refers more properly to the other varieties, although, in popular use, fine distinctions were not drawn, and the names sage and sage brush were indefinitely applied to everything of the artemisia characteristic. It is worthy of note that lands where the true sage brush flourishes are reasonably free from alkali and are generally fertile. The several varieties vary greatly in size, the *tridentata* occasionally attaining a height of from fifteen to twenty feet, and forming dense miniature forests. These large growths constitute as formidable an obstacle to travel as does a thicket of willows. The larger shrubs make a quick, hot fire, but a very transient one, and so are not esteemed a good fuel in comparison with wood. They are said to have been extensively and even exclusively used, however, by some of the tribes of the Columbia where wood is unknown.

One useful purpose which the sage brush serves, when its growth is very dense, is as a shelter from the storms of winter. Both in the earlier times when wild game grazed on the plains, and now when their place is taken by domestic herds, this otherwise useless plant has been the means of saving the lives of thousands of animals every winter.

This plant has the widest area of growth of any of the plants of the plains. From the 100th meridian westward to the Pacific it is almost never out of sight and its appearance becomes so familiar as scarcely to attract attention.

The greasewood *(Sarcobatus Vermiculatus)* resembles somewhat in external appearance the sage brush and like it flourishes only in the arid regions. Its distinguishing peculiarity, apart from its well-marked appearance, is the fact that it flourishes in an alkaline soil. The ash of the burned plant has been found to contain twenty-two per cent of potash and twenty-four per cent of soda. Its presence is a sure indication of black alkali, and it is now recognized among farmers that where the greasewood flourishes it is useless to attempt cultivation. The plant itself, like the larger sage brush, grows from four to eight feet high, and, contrary to what might be expected, affords browsing to cattle and sheep.

The cactus in its various forms is an exceedingly troublesome plant, where its growth is abundant, for its sharp thorns pierce the shoes or moccasins of pedestrians, and injure the feet of horses and mules. The prickly pear *(Cactus Opuntia)* is the most common of the plants. When in full bloom it is very attractive and it is said to have been much used for food. Another variety of cactus is the little spherical form *(Mamilaria Missouriensis)* that grows in great numbers on the prairies, and though its armature of thorns is less powerful than that of the prickly pear, it is still a very troublesome plant. Farther south on the plains of Arizona the giant cactus *(Cereus giganteus)* thrives with its weird and strange forms towering like ruined columns in every direction.

Among the most important vegetable productions of the plains, so far as the business of the fur trade was concerned, were the grasses, for upon them depended not only the sustenance of nearly all the native herbivorous animals, but also that of the beasts of burden which accompanied the expeditions. As a general thing the grasses were of excellent quality, and no country in the world can excel the Western plains as a grazing country. The growth on the lower prairies, where rain is more abundant, is more luxuriant than upon the high plains, and of course more plentiful on the stream bottoms than upon the table lands or hills. One most valuable quality of these prairie grasses is that they retain their nutritive power apparently quite as well after the season of growth is over as before, so that wherever the snow in winter does not cover the ground too deeply the grazing herds find sustenance as easily as in the summer time.

The three grasses that were the chief reliance of herbivorous animals were the gramma grass *(boutelona oligostachya)*, the buffalo grass *(buchloe dactyloides)*, and the bunch grass *(poa tenuifolia)*. The gramma grass had a wide distribution throughout the West, and was often called buffalo grass. It sometimes grew to a height of ten inches on the ranges. It is one of the native grasses which has been improved successfully under irrigation.

Buffalo grass likewise had a wide distribution, but unlike the gramma grass it is dying out before the advance of cultivated grasses.

Of all the grasses, however, the bunch grass was the most widespread and important. It is a rich, nutritious food for stock and equally good in winter as in summer. In fact, the term " bunch grass " in the Western country has become synonymous with excellence of quality in any line.

All over the West were to be found wild fruits which were an occasional resource for food when other means failed. Plums, bull berries, haws, cherries, service berries, and native varieties of the common fruits — raspberries, blackberries, strawberries and huckleberries, were met with. These fruits were gathered extensively by the Indians, who had effective methods of preserving them. To the hunter and trapper they were an entirely secondary means of subsistence.

There were numerous edible roots throughout the Western countries which were a substantial resource among the Indians, though rarely used, except under the compulsion of want, by the whites. The more important were the camas root *(camassia esculenta)*, the Indian turnip or *pomme blanche* of the French *(psoralea esculenta)*, the bitter root, and the wild onion, of which there were several varieties. The Indian women had an interesting method of gathering and preparing the common roots. After a sufficient quantity had been collected, holes were dug in the ground and lined with stones upon which a fire was built of sufficient strength to heat them thoroughly. The ashes were then carefully removed, and the stones were covered with fresh, leafy twigs, upon which the roots were placed until the hole was filled. The top was then covered over first with a layer of leaves and then with a layer of earth upon which a fire was maintained until the roots were thoroughly cooked. As thus prepared they formed an excellent food.

The *psoralea esculenta* was used in a dry and pounded state by the Indians. It was a nutritious food and extensively used.

The gathering of these roots at certain seasons and curing them for future supply was a regular business with most of the tribes who dwelt in the Great Basin. To such an extent did they depend upon this kind of food that they became known by the opprobrious epithet of "Rootdiggers" or simply "Diggers."

The maize or Indian corn was the most important plant regularly cultivated by the Indians, and among the tribes in permanent villages it was a common food. The planting was usually done in May. The ground was prepared with a utensil made of the shoulder blade of a buffalo, prior to the advent of the traders, but after that with the common hoe. The seeds were planted in rows, and the corn was hoed two or three times during the season, pains being taken to bank the earth against the hills for the better retention of the moisture. The harvest generally took place in October. The cornfields were unfenced and were frequent objects of raids by hostile tribes. The traders made extensive use of the maize and all the larger posts had mills to grind it.

When the traders began to get a permanent hold on the country, they introduced along the Missouri some of the more common and hardy vegetables such as pumpkins, beans, etc., while every important post had its regular garden in which a variety of products was raised for the use of the inmates.

With a people who set so high a value as did the Indians upon the pipe as an indispensable feature of their ceremonial intercourse with the whites and with each other, the material used in the pipe had an importance by no means to be despised. The Indians cultivated a native tobacco in the early days *(Nicotiana quadrivalvis)*, but when they came to use the white man's tobacco they always mixed with it a substance called kinikinik which consisted of the leaves or inner bark of certain shrubs. Among those more commonly used were the leaves of the smooth sumac *(Rhus Glabra)*; the inner bark of the red-osier dogwood or so-called red willow *(Cornus stolonifera)* and the leaves and bark of the bear berry *(Arctostaphylos uva ursi)*.

Such is a catalogue of the principal uses which the hunter derived from the plant life of the West. The cottonwood for forts, houses, boats, forage, and fuel; cedars for building, willows for browsing, grasses for grazing, roots and wild fruits for food, the cactus and sage as obstacles, and the mountain forests for the general uses of lumber, when convenient of access — these were about the extent of his direct dependence upon or relation to the flora of the country.

CHAPTER VI.

FAUNA.

THE BUFFALO, BEAVER, AND BEAR.

Great importance of the buffalo — Description — Flesh of the buffalo — Appearance and habits — Methods of capture — Buffalo butchering — Territorial range of the buffalo — Rapid disappearance — Commercial importance of the buffalo — The importance of the beaver in the fur trade — Description of the beaver — Method of capture — The beaver skin — Commercial importance — The grizzly bear — The most dangerous American quadruped — Method of attack — Notable encounters with grizzly bears — The black bear.

UNDER the above title will be considered the three representatives of animal life on the plains and in the mountains with which the trader and trapper, as well as the Indian, were most familiar and which entered most largely into the daily life of the natives and the business of the fur trade.

More than the horse to the Arab, the camel to the pilgrim in the desert, the reindeer to the Laplander, the seal to the Esquimau, or the elephant to the Hindoo, was the BUFFALO to the trans-Mississippi Indian. History affords no other example where a single product of nature, whether animal or vegetable, has filled so large a place in the life of a people. The self-sustenance of the tribes of the plains would have been impossible without it, and when the buffalo disappeared these tribes fell back upon the government in hopeless dependence for the very necessities of existence.

This remarkable animal *(Bos Americanus)* furnished nearly everything that the Indians wanted, and in the life of the trapper as well it was a principal resource. Almost every part of its huge body was utilized, and a volume would be required to catalogue its manifold applications. The hide was dressed in a variety of ways, each special treatment having its particular use. The lodge of the Indian, his bed and covering when asleep, his clothes, his weapons of war, his shield in battle, kettles for his food, boats for crossing the river, material for his saddle and halter, strings for his whip and bow, hair for ornamenting his dress — all these and many other articles were made from the robe that grew around this most useful animal. His bones, likewise, from the short, curved, strong horns to the hoofs that supported him, were manufactured into an endless variety of articles that entered into every part of the domestic life of the Indian.

The flesh of the buffalo was the most wholesome, palatable, and universally used of that of any wild animal. The extent of its use, that is, the degree to which the entire animal was thus utilized, depended upon its abundance. When there were multitudes at hand the epicurean palate rejected all but the choicest morsels, but in times of scarcity every part of the flesh did duty as food. The greatest luxury was the tongue and this was often the only part taken. The hump ribs and the tenderloin came next in favor, while smaller parts, such as the marrow bones, liver and gall, and parts of the intestines, were often devoured with avidity while the process of butchering was still going on. The fleece fat upon the animal's back was generally thick and rich and was an important article in the process of cooking.

All authorities unite in praising the excellence of buffalo meat, and the true plainsman would never admit that the domestic beef could approach it. It always agreed with the digestion and it seemed impossible to overeat of it. Combined with the healthfulness of the open-air life on the prairies or in the mountains, it formed a perfect food whose virtues became widely known; and many an invalid has recovered his health on the plains with no shelter but the sky and no food but the meat of the buffalo.

It was not always, however, that the hunter or traveler had the buffalo with him, and it became necessary to provide in times of plenty against the times of deficiency. This was ordinarily done by the process of jerking or drying the meat. The flesh was cut up in thin strips and hung up in the open air to dry, after which it could be kept indefinitely without deterioration. The Indians had another process of curing buffalo meat, equal, if not superior, to the most approved modern canning processes, and wholly free from the use of chemicals or embalming preparations which too often cast suspicion upon the preserved meats of the present day. This was the much used pemmican. It was prepared by cutting the flesh into thin slices, thoroughly drying it, preferably in smoke, until it was hard and crisp; then pulverizing it by pounding upon a stone, and finally mixing it with an equal weight of buffalo tallow or marrow fat. Sometimes it was seasoned with powdered wild cherry, stone and all. The whole mixture, before hardening, was introduced into skin bags, shaken down compactly, and then sealed tight. In this way it would last indefinitely and was always ready for use without cooking. It formed a very palatable as well as nutritious food.

These manifold and important uses did not exhaust the purposes which this most valuable animal subserved. In those regions where wood was scarce, and that was nearly everywhere except upon the larger streams and in the mountains, the dried ordure of the buffalo supplied an excellent and ready fuel. Finally, to push the range of utility to the extreme limit, there are instances on record where the lonely hunter, caught unexpectedly by a prairie blizzard, has slain and disemboweled a buffalo, and, crawling inside the huge body, has found a safe refuge from the tempest.

For so useful an animal, and one of such mild and inoffensive habits, the buffalo was terrible in appearance, misshapen, unwieldy, and ponderous. Its massive, shaggy front, its matted mane almost concealing the small, bright eyes, and its short, curved, powerful horns, altogether gave it an aspect of ferocity which was quite out of keeping with the actual instincts of the animal.

The color of the buffalo was dun or dark brown inclining to black and was remarkably uniform throughout the species. Variations from the common color were so rare that the Indians attributed such as were met with to supernatural causes. Thus the white buffalo was an object of worship among most of the plains tribes, and a white buffalo skin was considered great medicine, the possession of which was a mark of distinction.

In its habits the buffalo was a thoroughly gregarious animal, being rarely seen alone, unless from injury or age, it was unable to keep up with its companions. Not only was the buffalo generally seen in herds, but the smaller herds were usually parts of larger ones. Great multitudes of these animals migrated from one section to another, and when they were passing any place their numbers were often beyond the power of the mind to estimate.

It will readily be seen that the business of capturing animals so useful and necessary was an important one. The buffalo hunt was the highest sport which could engage the skill of the hunter. The animal was not keen except in its sense of smell, which was very acute and warned him with certainty of danger from the windward. In his flight he displayed a sort of stupid persistence, rushing madly along, often into the very teeth of destruction, and he was not alarmed at the crash of a rifle so long as he saw neither smoke nor hunter.

The methods of capture were various. With the Indians wholesale destruction was commonly resorted to by alluring vast herds at full gallop to the brink of a precipice or into the mouth of an artificial enclosure. The force of the mass behind crowded those in advance ahead until they fell upon each other at the foot of the cliffs or in the enclosures, and were thus slaughtered by the hundreds. A great deal of skill, and favoring conditions of wind, as well as the most adroit management on the part of the Indian, who, clad like a buffalo, acted as decoy to the herd, were essential to the complete success of the maneuver. These hunts were matters of great ceremony among the Indians. Days and weeks were devoted to preparation, with the most rigid laws against individual hunting or frightening of the herds, and with due observance of the established religious rites of the tribes.

The true sportsman-like attack was by direct onslaught on horseback, or, as it was sometimes called from the manner of approach, the "surround." It was managed with the same ceremonious preliminaries that were observed in all great buffalo hunts by the Indians. The attack was made by riding in careful order, under strict discipline, directly upon the herd until the latter had fully scented the danger, when the hunters broke into a wild gallop, each free to go where he chose, and fell pell-mell upon the herd, chasing and slaying, amid the thunder of hoofs, the bellowing of the frightened beasts, and the clouds of dust raised in the mad rush of so many animals. So completely panic-stricken would these mighty herds become, and so little sensible of where to flee, that most of them fell victims to their pursuers, and the ground where the attack took place would be strewn with hundreds of dead bodies. Now and then a luckless hunter would be unhorsed, or even slain in the confusion of the chase, when some infuriated monster turned too quickly upon him.

The scene of these hunts, after they were over, was one field of carnage, or gigantic slaughter house, in which the women were everywhere busy, securing the trophies of the day. Theirs truly was the laborious part, and days were required to gather the hides and meat and the other fruits of a few hours' hunt.

The practical American hunter, when not bent on sport for sport's sake, but after meat for *its* sake, adopted a much simpler, more direct, and quite as efficacious means of securing his game. This was the method of "still hunting," which consisted, as the name suggests, in stealing unobserved upon the intended victim. Generally a small band was preferable. It was not a difficult thing to crawl from the leeward to within sure rifle shot without being discovered. Then, choosing the best concealment the ground afforded, the hunter would commence the work of destruction by firing at the fairest mark. The animals, seeing nothing, and hearing only the report, would not generally flee, but stand still in apparent wonderment. Presently the wounded animal falls, and the companions, smelling its blood, gather round it and try to make it rise, and even lick its wounds; or they go on grazing, apparently thinking that their companion has lain down to rest. Meanwhile the hunter's rifle is busy, shot upon shot is heard, and victim after victim falls, until, either because there are no more to kill, or because he is surfeited with slaughter, he rises and surveys his conquest.[1]

The buffalo was a difficult animal to kill. A ball upon its shaggy head or neck fell off as from a panoply of steel. Wounds in the nether portion of the body were rarely fatal. It was only in the region of the heart that the blow was sure, and the Indians and white hunters sought out this region in all their attacks. The animal was not ordinarily pugnacious or dangerous, and only when smarting with its wounds would it turn upon its enemy. But its rage at such times made it a formidable adversary, and lucky was the hunter who could keep out of its way.

In the spring of the year when the ice moved on the Missouri river, great numbers of these animals were drowned in attempting to cross after the ice had become broken up. In some years their bodies floated down the stream in such numbers as to render the air almost unendurable to boat crews on their way up the river. It was a very singular thing that the Indians liked this kind of buffalo meat better than any other, and no matter how advanced in decomposition it might be, they would tow it ashore and use it in preference to fresh meat.

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[1] An instance of this, in which the hunter was the well-known adopted Crow chief, Edward Rose, is related in the Journal of the Atkinson Expedition of 1825, where an account is given of the killing of six buffalo. "Rose, an interpreter, one of the party, covered himself with bushes, and crawled into the gang of these bulls, and shot down the six on the same ground before the others ran off."

The butchering of the slain buffalo, as practiced by the American hunter, was an art *sui generis*. It proceeded in exactly the opposite way from that employed in dressing domestic cattle. Instead of turning the body upon its back, it was placed in a reverse position, and held there by spreading out its legs to serve as props. The skin was then parted along the spine and cleaved down the sides. The rest of the process depended for thoroughness upon the wants of the party. If meat was plentiful only the choicest parts were taken. The tongue, hump ribs, and fleece fat were always included, as well as the marrow bones, and generally the gall and the liver. As piece after piece was severed from the trunk, it was deposited in a pile on the clean grass, and after the butchering was over it was packed on the horses or mules and borne to camp.

The hungry hunters did not by any means always await the slow process of cooking, although this was rushed to the utmost. Some would take the choicest parts and eat them *au naturel,* while others would pare from the roast rarely done slices and keep it turning and cooking anew. Voracious appetites were one of the features of life upon the plains, and the richest repast which the wealth and luxury of cities could afford was nothing to the crude meals of buffalo meat around the unsheltered camp fires on the broad prairies.

It is difficult to appreciate, at this distant day, how dependent upon the existence of one species another can be, as illustrated in the relation of the buffalo to the Indian, and it will not excite surprise to know that the one entered largely into the religious life of the other. Many customs and ceremonies had reference to it, and with the dying warriors were always buried the implements of the chase for use in the Spirit Land. It is also easy to understand with what prophetic vision the Indian saw the downfall of his race linked with the extermination of the buffalo, and could measure his own decline by the rate at which these animals were disappearing before the advance of civilization.

It remains to touch upon the territorial range and inconceivable numbers of the buffalo in the days of its unlimited growth. The researches of naturalists have shown pretty clearly that it roamed over all the country between the Alleghenies and the Rocky mountains. There is no satisfactory evidence that it ranged extensively on the coast, or beyond or within the mountains on either side. Its later appearance as far west as the Salt Lake Valley was probably due to pressure from the east. North and south it roamed from near the Gulf to as far as 60° north latitude. At the time of which this history treats, the buffalo had entirely disappeared from east of the Mississippi, and in 1807 had already receded as far as to the 97th meridian. It was a common saying during the era of the fur trade that the buffalo was retreating before the white man at the rate of ten miles a year, and this is perhaps not an exaggerated measure of his certain and continuous disappearance.

The multitude of these animals, even in later years, was, from all obtainable evidence, literally innumerable. There have been many attempts to estimate his probable number, from the size of particular herds, from the quantities of bones collected since his extermination and from other data; but while the attempt can, of course, never succeed with the least degree of precision, the proof is incontrovertible that they numbered millions and millions. It is a well-vouched fact that railroad trains have been stopped to let the herds pass over the track, while the delay of steamboats on the Missouri from a similar cause was by no means a rare occurrence. The innumerable trails worn by these animals may still be seen in many places, silent but impressive proofs of the vastness of the multitudes that used them.

Marvelous, however, as were the numbers of the buffalo, their complete disappearance from the face of the earth is more marvelous still. Ages of geological history were required to bring about the decline and disappearance of species that once flourished here, but the avarice of the hunter and trapper and the wanton cruelty of the sportsman have sufficed to exterminate the buffalo in the space of a single generation.[3]

The chief articles of commerce obtained from the buffalo were his skin, tongue, and tallow. In the matter of bulk, if not in number, the buffalo robes exceeded all other furs combined. They were mostly shipped from the immediate valley of the Missouri, because their weight and bulk made transportation by caravan difficult. The American Fur Company sent down to St. Louis, in 1840, 67,000 robes. In 1848 there were received at St. Louis 110,000 robes and other skins, mostly buffalo. These robes were scattered all over the United States and Europe and were everywhere used for laprobes and overcoats. A few of these old garments may still be seen in the West.

The quantity of tongues annually sent down to St. Louis was immense and in the single year 1848 reached the number of 25,000. Tallow was likewise extensively shipped. A novel method of transporting it occasionally resorted to was to fill log canoes or dugouts with it, close them over tightly with skins and let them float down the river.

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[3] Some of the causes which contributed to the rapid disappearance of the buffalo are noted by Dr. F. V. Hayden who visited the Upper Missouri county several times between 1850 and 1860: "As near as I could ascertain, about 250,000 individuals are destroyed every year, about 100,000 being killed for robes. At the present time, the number of males to the females seems to be in the ratio of ten to one, and this fact is readily accounted for from the fact that the males are seldom killed when the cows can be obtained. Skins of females only are used for robes, and are preferred for food. Besides the robes which are traded to the whites by the Indians, each man, woman, and child requires from one to three robes a year for clothing. A large quantity are employed in the manufacture of lodges, and an immense number of animals, which it would be difficult to estimate, are annually destroyed by wolves and by accidents."

Trans. Am. Phil. Soc. vol. XII. New Series, p. 151.

The great importance of the BEAVER in the life of the hunter and trapper arose almost entirely from the commercial value of its fur, which is one of the finest that nature produces. At this early period in particular it was in great demand. An average price was four dollars per pound, and as the little animal carried from one to two pounds on its body the premium for its destruction was from four to ten dollars, according to its size and the prevailing price of furs. As the streams of the West — of the whole country for that matter — originally swarmed with these animals in numbers that rivaled the illimitable buffalo herds of the plains, it will be readily understood what a mine of wealth here lay open to the industry of the trader and trapper.

Every stream of the West was as rich as if sands of gold covered its bottoms — a richness, moreover, which, if gathered with judgment and not to the degree of extermination, would renew itself by natural increase.

The American beaver *(Castor Canadensis)* is a small animal, of very striking appearance and of amphibious habits. It is never found except near watercourses and only near those which are lined with shrubbery. As with the whole animal kingdom, its peculiar methods of life have the single aim of securing it food, shelter, and protection. The beaver and his family live in lodges which are built near the shore, with the living room above water, but with a sub-aqueous passage whose outer opening is in the stream. In small streams, where the water is too shallow to conceal this passageway, or protect it from ice in the winter, the beaver builds dams to increase its depth. This part of his domestic economy makes the beaver a unique creature in the animal creation. It is the wonder of engineers how he can accomplish what he does. It is true that the dams are never high, only two or three feet, and much oftener less; but even for that height it is astonishing how such structures can withstand the pressure against them; for they are nothing but masses of sticks piled together in all directions and plastered up with mud. They are very effective, however, and nature soon strengthens them by causing shrubbery to grow upon them until finally they are so firmly interwoven with roots that they resist the stoutest floods. Moreover, the beaver believes in maintaining what he has built and so goes over his work with regular annual repairs. These are made both upon the dam and the lodge late in the season when the beaver is ready to house himself for the winter.

The cutting of trees by the beaver has a threefold purpose — the construction of the dam, the building of the house, and the supply of food. The beaver's diet is vegetable, and mainly the bark of trees, soft shrubs and the like. A large supply of sticks sufficient for the winter's need is gathered every fall. As the bark is gnawed from these during the winter they are carried out of the lodge and thrown either on the dam for use in reinforcing it or into the stream below, where they are washed away.

The beaver is often given more credit for sagacity in felling trees than he deserves. One has but to examine his work to see that he has comparatively little idea of the art as a successful woodsman practices it. He gnaws around the entire circumference and with a tree standing vertical his work would not have perceptible influence upon the direction of falling. But as it is usually the case that trees on the bank of a stream lean towards it, such trees when cut off, fall into the stream. The beaver shows no sagacity in this, unless in selecting those trees that have a decided inclination from the vertical and in the direction in which he wishes them to fall.

With that wonderful adaptation which nature shows in all her works, the anatomical makeup of the beaver is admirably suited to his mode of life. For cutting wood he has four powerful incisor teeth, two in each jaw, deeply planted, and curved in form, the upper ones being something more than a semicircle, and the lower ones something less. Powerful jaw muscles enable him to do his work, while extraordinary salivary glands provide the means of digesting his peculiarly dry and hard food. The tail of the beaver, like a powerful sculling oar, makes him a successful and expert navigator, while it enables him, with the further aid of his peculiarly shaped hind legs, to sit bolt upright when engaged in the work of cutting down trees.

As beaver fur was the great staple of the fur trade, and widely sought everywhere, trappers became very expert in their knowledge of the habits of the little animal and the best methods of taking him. They could readily tell, from the appearance of a lodge, the probable number of inmates and where they could most successfully entrap them. The universal mode of taking the beaver was with the steel trap, in the use of which long experience had taught the hunters great skill. The trap is a strong one of about five pounds' weight, and was valued in the fur trade period at twelve to sixteen dollars. The chain attached to the trap is about five feet long, with a swivel near the end to keep it from kinking. The trapper, in setting the trap, wades into the stream so that his tracks may not be apparent; plants his trap in three or four inches of water a little way from the bank, and fastens the chain to a strong stick, which he drives into the bed of the stream at the full chain length from the trap. Immediately over the trap a little twig is set so that one end shall be about four inches above the surface of the water. On this is put a peculiar bait, supplied by the animal itself, castor, castorum, or musk, the odor of which has a great attraction for the beaver. To reach the bait he raises his mouth toward it and in this act brings his feet directly under it. He thus treads upon the trap, springs it and is caught. In his fright he seeks concealment by his usual method of diving into deep water, but finds himself held by the chain which he can not gnaw in two, and after an ineffectual struggle, he sinks to the bottom and is drowned. Not infrequently he wrests the chain from the stake, drags the trap to deeper water before he succumbs, or, taking it to the shore, becomes entangled in the undergrowth. In such cases he may cause the trapper much laborious and uncomfortable search, particularly if he has to wade deep streams in cold weather.

Generally the beaver was skinned near the place of its capture, and only the skin, the tail, and the castorum glands were taken to camp. Here other persons than the trappers attended to the work of cleaning, dressing, curing, and properly marking the skins. On the average it took about eighty skins to make a pack of one hundred pounds, the value of which was from three to five hundred dollars in the mountains. The packs were prepared with the utmost care, the choicest furs being placed in the inside. The great value of such property caused it to be guarded with much solicitude, for a single Indian could carry away, unaided, the rich produce of a year's hard labor.

The flesh of the beaver, except the tail, was not used for food, unless in scarcity of other supply. The tail was considered one of the richest delicacies which the mountains afforded, taking rank with the most favored parts of the buffalo.

The beaver also supplied another article of commerce, a secretion from two small glands in its body. This was always known in the commerce of the mountains as castorum. In the arts it is more commonly called castor. In the mountains its value was about three dollars a pound. The castorum was used as the beaver's bait, and thus the little animal itself supplied the means of alluring its race to destruction.

The extensive use of beaver fur in the early years of the century caused an immense exportation from America to Europe, reaching as high as 200,000 skins annually. This great draught on the supply led to the rapid extermination of the beaver. It so happened, however, that at the time when this process had begun to show its effects, an unfavorable change came over the beaver market of Europe which helped to counteract it. Silk largely supplanted the use of this fur in the manufacture of hats, while other kinds of fur took its place in other uses. The price fell so that the trapping was no longer profitable, and nature, responding to the relief thus produced, began to recuperate her resources. In later years, although the price of beaver did not fully recover its old figure, its exportation began to increase, until it finally very nearly recovered its former magnitude.

The king of American wild beasts was the GRIZZLY BEAR *(Ursus horribilis)*, the only animal which the hunter looked upon as really dangerous. It is distinguished from any other species of bear by several marked characteristics, such as the facial profile, shape of anterior claws, color of hair, and lack of ability to climb trees. The color varies greatly, and the name grizzly is not an inapt description of it, although the preponderance of white was such, in the average specimen, that the name "white bear" was more commonly used by the hunter. In size the grizzly bear averaged about six feet in length from nose to tip of tail, but they were often found to measure nine, and instances are mentioned of the enormous length of fourteen feet. A weight of five hundred pounds was common. The grizzly was an exceedingly powerful animal, and extremely tenacious of life. He was not naturally pugnacious; very rarely attacked a man without provocation, and even when wounded frequently attempted to escape. But at such times it was the general experience that he was disposed to fight, and if thoroughly roused his strength and rage were terrible. It was often noted as a remarkable fact that when struck by a bullet he started instantly in the direction from which it came without waiting to see his enemy. However this may be, when once launched on his work of revenge, nothing could withstand him. His attack was from a standing position, first by means of a blow from his fore-foot, which was then followed by gnashing and tearing with mouth and claws.

It was always of the first importance for the hunter to aim well in attacking these dangerous brutes. A shot between the eyes or behind the ear was most effectual, for bears have been known to survive several minutes and run a long distance after being shot through the heart. The great danger to the hunter was that of being caught with an empty gun after having inflicted a wound not mortal. It required coolness and composure rarely exemplified to stand and face calmly an enraged grizzly, even with a gun loaded. "Never be alarmed at a bear's rush" says a hunter of experience. "Never fire in a hurry. The bear will always stop, rise on his hind legs, and prepare to strike a sidelong blow with his fore feet. At this moment, when his head is extended, and in a position in which the ball will not glance, aim between the eyes and fire, and the bear will fall dead." Very good advice, but it would have been much more to the point to have given a recipe for cool nerves and the power to await calmly the approach of the ferocious monster, deliberately calculating the precise spot and moment for the fatal blow. The same authority adds that "two hunters of experience, armed with breech loaders, never hesitate to attack a bear. While he prepares to strike one, they will both get a good shot, one in front and the other behind the ears."

We find that all unlucky encounters with grizzly bears have resulted from this one cause: that the bear has been wounded, but not fatally, and has turned upon his assailant before the latter could reload his rifle or escape; or has so terrified the other hunters that they have either forgotten to shoot, or have lost the power of effective aim. The history of the fur trade is full of incidents of this nature. The majority were harmless and even ludicrous, but many resulted in injuries of a serious nature, while there were not a few instances of actual death.

One of the most noted encounters with a grizzly bear in the whole history of the west was that of Hugh Glass in 1823. This remarkable episode is made the subject of a separate chapter in another section of this work. The fury of the bear in his attack upon Glass was terrible, and left the victim in a state in which all hope of recovery was despaired of.

Another instance, and this time a fatal one, occurred near a camp of hunters on Purgatory river, in the present state of Colorado, November 13, 1831. It was perhaps the only instance on record where a grizzly has been known to climb a tree after its victim, but it appears that the tree was very much inclined, so that the bear had no difficulty in walking up it.[3]

Another fatal encounter brings up a well-known name in the fur trade history of the West — that of the Sublettes. Andrew, one of the four Sublette brothers, of St. Louis, went to California after the discovery of gold there, and settled near Los Angeles. Grizzly bears of more than ordinarily ferocious type abounded there. The Indians rarely molested them, nor the Spaniards either, except when compelled to from their frequency around the ranches. But Sublette was not of this disposition. A famous bear hunter, passionately fond of the sport, he lost no time in testing the reputed qualities of the California type. In one of his encounters, accompanied by a powerful dog, himself a good bear fighter, he wounded one bear, when its mate suddenly pounced upon him from the bushes. With unloaded gun, he was compelled to battle with the aid of his dog and knife alone. He slew both the bears, but himself received wounds from which he never recovered. A pathetic feature of this incident was the faithfulness of the dog, not only on the field of battle, but by the sick bed, and afterward by his master's grave, where he lingered inconsolable, refusing food and drink, until death came to his relief.

It would be easy to multiply these incidents, for they were of frequent occurrence, and are well attested by reputable witnesses. They all justify the propriety of the zoological name — *ursus horribilis*.

The fur of the grizzly bear did not have a high value, although it was generally saved, as opportunity afforded, and sent to market.

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[3] This incident is related in the *Journal of Jacob Fowler*, edited by Dr. Elliott Coues, F. P. Harper, New York, 1898, p. 41.

The BLACK BEAR *(Ursus Americanus)* was everywhere met with in the mountainous regions. It was an inoffensive animal and rarely dangerous, even when wounded. Its fur was valuable, and formed a regular part of the trade.

CHAPTER VII.

FAUNA.

OTHER SPECIES OF INTEREST IN THE FUR TRADE.

The fur-bearing animals — The elk — The deer — The antelope — The mountain sheep — The wolf — The panther — The prairie dog — The horse — The dog — The term "game" — Birds of little importance in the fur trade — Fishes — The salmon — Its great importance — Description — Method of capture — The rattlesnake — The mosquito — Ants and grasshoppers — The honey bee.

BESIDES the beaver, there were many other animals which had no particular value except for their fine furs. Among these may be mentioned the large red, common red, and silver FOXES *(vulpes macruris, fulvus* and *argentalis)*; the OTTER *(lutra Canadensis)*; the MINK *(putorius vision)*; the RACCOON *(procyon hernandezi)*; several varieties of SQUIRREL *(sciurus)*; POLE CAT *(Mephitis mephitica)*; and the MUSKRAT *(ondetra zibethicus)*. All of these animals were regularly hunted, and their furs were annually shipped in considerable quantities to St. Louis. None of them present any particular features of interest.

The ELK *(cervus Canadensis,* or American elk,) was always an important animal to the hunter and trapper, although for its flesh mainly. Next to the buffalo it was probably the most generally eaten. Its wide distribution, large size, and comparative ease of capture made it a great resource when buffalo could not be had. Its meat was excellent, and a good elk steak ranked well with domestic beef. The hide of the elk was but little used, except for certain special purposes, being inferior for general use to that of other wild animals. Its horns, likewise, were not used, except in ornamentation. Fences were made of them, doorways were ornamented with them, and in a variety of ways the stately antlers of this noble animal did service in adorning the abodes of men.[1]

There were various species of DEER, the most prominent of which were the blacktail, or mule deer *(cariacus macrotis)*, and the common deer *(cariacus Virginianus)*. Of these the first was considered the most important as game, and ranked with the elk in this regard. The deer was an excellent object for the sportsman's rifle, and good meat for his camp. The skin also was an important article of commerce; and shaved deer skins in particular formed no inconsiderable part of the cargoes which the American Fur Company brought annually from the Indian country.

The ANTELOPE *(antilocapra Americana)* was one of the most interesting animals of the plains, although of little practical importance except for food, and then only when other game was scarce. Its flesh was considered very good, and it is said that its hide was used for saddles. Its great attraction for the hunter lay in its remarkably agile and watchful habits, which made its capture difficult, and an excellent test of sportsmanlike skill.

The antelope has been called the gazelle of the prairies, and was the swiftest animal of the plains. It was quick of sight, acute of ear and smell, and ever alert for danger. Its flight was rarely direct, but broken and irregular, now this way and now that, pausing every little while to look at its pursuer, until finally it would disappear.

It was generally seen on the prairies in groups, rarely, however, within gunshot, or in depressions, where it could be approached under cover. It is said of the antelope that its curiosity afforded the surest way to capture it, and no less an authority than Audubon confirms this statement from his own experience. The usual method was to take a piece of red or scarlet cloth and tie it to a stick or ramrod. Then the hunter would lie down upon the prairie and alternately raise and lower the cloth. The curiosity of the antelope would be aroused, and he would circle round and round the spot, gradually coming nearer and nearer, his head erect, his movements full of suspicion, yet unable to overcome his curiosity at the strange object before him, until he would finally approach within the range of the hunter's rifle.

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[1] In the thirties there was a notable monument of elk horns on the prairie near the Missouri river above the mouth of the Yellowstone. It had been gradually built up by the Indians, who, whenever they passed, placed each a brace of antlers upon it, until, at the time of Maximilian's visit in 1833, it was about eighteen feet high and fifteen feet through at the base, forming a most unusual and striking object.

The MOUNTAIN SHEEP *(Ahsata,* or bighorn), the *grosse corne* of the French *(Ovis Montana),* was to the Bad Lands and the mountains what the antelope was to the prairie: one of the most difficult animals to capture. Wonderfully agile, it possessed a skill in climbing rugged places and in getting about among crags and precipices that has ever been the wonder of those familiar with its performances. Its home was in the mountainous country, and as its color was not easily distinguishable from its environment, it was more generally observed when in its favorite position on the crests of cliffs, where its form stood out in clear relief against the sky. Among these inaccessible fastnesses the bighorn reared its young, and here was its sure refuge from its enemies. It derived a large part of its subsistence from the scanty herbage of these places, although it descended to the valleys for the more abundant grass to be found there.

The most striking feature in the appearance of the animal is its enormous head, neck, and horns. In a specimen mentioned by Irving, the horns were three feet eight inches long, and five inches through at the base. It is hard to conceive what use nature can have designed for such a ponderous impediment. It was a common belief among the hunters that the animal made use of its horns in leaping from cliff to cliff. Where the distance was too great to alight in safety upon its feet, it was said to fall upon its enormous horns, which, with its powerful neck, easily withstood the shock. There is no evidence that this theory was correct, although it is interesting enough to make one wish it were. The broken horns of the male, often observed, are not, according to Audubon, due to this cause, as many hunters suppose, but to battles which the animals indulge in with each other.

The flesh of the bighorn was of excellent quality, and was rated among some Indian tribes as superior to buffalo meat. The great difficulty of procuring it, however, made it something of a rarity. No important commercial use was made of the skin or other parts of the animal; but its head and horns have always had a high value for ornamentation.

The WOLF was the most ignoble of the inhabitants of the plains. It personified cowardice, beggary, craftiness, deceit, mercilessness, and all the group of evil qualities that are comprised in the term *wolfishness*. It was the shark of the plains, and it followed the caravans for whatever it might find along the route, such as the refuse of camps, or the remains of buffalo and other game slain by the hunters. It delighted to disinter the bodies of persons who died on the way, and only the most thorough protection could save the graves of the dead from this desecration. It was essentially a cowardly animal, and attacked only the feeble and young, unless with overpowering numbers. Bands of wolves would indeed slay huge buffalo by their incessant annoyances; some say by constantly biting at the buffalo's tongue until it was destroyed, when death would result from starvation; others by biting the tendons of the legs until the animal was disabled, when it could be safely dispatched. Its methods were always stealthy and its attacks indirect. In the night it filled the air with its unearthly and hideous howlings, and gave an impression of power out of all proportion to what it really possessed. Such was the wolf, an animal of little value to man, yet one that he had to take account of because of its troublesome habits. We shall notice but two of its varieties.

The American GREY WOLF *(Canis lupus Occidentalis)* was the largest of the wolves and the most troublesome. Its length was about three feet and its color a dingy grey, though subject to much variation. The animal was rarely, if ever, known to attack man, even when impelled by extreme hunger. On the prairies it was generally found in the vicinity of buffalo herds, where it attacked the feeble and broken-down animals or the young calves. It is often said that wolves killed buffaloes and even the fleet antelope by chasing them in a circle, being frequently relieved by fresh runners, until the victim fell from exhaustion. Examples have been known where wolves have killed tethered animals during the night, and have also dragged articles almost from under the heads of the sleeping owners. They were thus always a source of extreme annoyance.

A much smaller species of wolf, but an exceedingly common one, was the COYOTE *(Canis latrans)*. It was a cowardly animal, rarely venturing, even in numbers, to attack large game, but its depredations in a smaller way, and its irrepressible nightly howlings, made it one of the greatest nuisances of the plains.

These are the two varieties of wolf which mainly concerned the trapper. They were never used for food except in case of necessity. The skin of the grey wolf, though gathered to some extent, was not of great value in the market, and formed an insignificant part of the trade.

The AMERICAN PANTHER *(Felis concolor)*, the "painter" of the trappers, is of very little importance in fur trade history. Its flesh, however, was accounted the choicest which the wilderness afforded, not excepting even the tail of the beaver or the most delicate morsels from the buffalo. "Painter meat" was the synonym of anything which was particularly excellent.

The WILD CAT *(Lynx rufus)*, and the COLUMBIA LYNX *(Lynx Canadensis)*, were met with in different parts of the west, but received only scant attention from the hunters.

The PRAIRIE DOG *(Cynomys Ludovicianus)* is one of the most numerous and interesting, yet utterly useless, animals of the prairies, and is referred to here, not because the hunter derived any benefit from it, either for food or fur, but because it always excited the curiosity of travelers in that country. There is no quadruped of the plains that receives more attention in the narratives of the time than does the prairie dog.

As seen in different localities it varies greatly in size, in some places being fully fifteen inches in length, and in others scarcely five. Whether these differences are specific or not is not clear. The little animal resembles slightly in form and habits the woodchuck or ground hog of the East. It is much smaller, however, lighter in color, and more gregarious in its habits. It burrows in the ground as the woodchuck does, but always in villages or colonies, and such a thing as the solitary dwelling of a prairie dog is scarcely to be seen. Its "towns" or "villages" usually contain a great number of habitations, and the passerby will see the white mounds, where the earth has been thrown out of the holes, scattered thickly in every direction. Upon these he will find the little inmates gathered singly or in groups, some sitting erect on their haunches, others with their heads aimed toward the holes ready to dart in on the instant, and others still capering from one mound to another. They set up a shrill but diminutive yelp, which, in a large town, makes a continual clatter. Upon the too near approach of the visitor they utter a succession of these yelps, shake their short tails with incredible rapidity, and dart into their holes. So remarkably quick are they in concealing themselves that it is only with great difficulty that they can be taken. It requires a good shot to hit one, and then the chances are that even if the shot is mortal the animal will escape beyond reach before it dies. Attempts to drown the dogs out of their holes, and likewise to dig them out, have almost invariably proved unsuccessful.

The prairie dog dwells always upon the arid prairie, and feeds exclusively upon the short prairie grass. It would seem that it lives without water. The towns make dangerous ground for horseback riding, on account of the frequent holes, in which the horses are liable to stumble.

A remarkable peculiarity of these villages is that they are likewise inhabited by the rattlesnake and a species of owl. Stansbury says that in passing through one of these towns several of the dogs were shot by members of the party, but when it was attempted to reach into the holes and pull them out, they were invariably met with the ominous rattle of the dreaded reptile. Whether the rattlesnake and the owl are enemies or friends of the prairie dog, naturalists have left undetermined, but it would hardly seem as if such close companionship could be compatible with very bitter enmity.

The HORSE *(Equus Caballus)*, in its wild or domesticated state, was everywhere met with throughout the West during the period of the fur trade. It was, however, a comparatively recent arrival there, for it was not native to America, but was a descendant from the horse introduced by the Spaniards into Mexico. It multiplied with great rapidity, and in its wild state overspread the southern plains, where it was captured by the Indians and scattered over every part of the West. The wild horse or mustang of the southern plains was very common in the early times of the Santa Fe Trail. He is described as a very beautiful animal when wild, although presenting nothing of extraordinary attraction when reduced to a domesticated condition. The mustangs generally moved in droves of considerable size, and occasionally caused the trader no little trouble by dashing in among his stock. The latter were much more inclined to adopt the habits of the mustang than the former the restraints of domestic bondage.

The mustang was an animal of considerable commercial importance, and thousands of them were caught for the market. They were generally taken with the lasso, and were easily tamed. A method of capture sometimes resorted to was that of "creasing," which consisted in shooting a rifle ball through the top of the neck so as to cut a nerve at that point. The animal was rendered momentarily insensible, and before he recovered was securely fastened. This method required such fine marksmanship as to be rarely resorted to, on account of the large proportion of animals killed. Pike relates that the Mexicans sometimes caught them by means of an artificial enclosure similar to the buffalo pen of the northern Indians.

There was a tradition in the early days of a mustang of marvelous beauty, a stallion, perfect in form and milk-white in color save for a pair of black ears. It was as fleet as it was beautiful, and no horseman was ever able to take it. It was reported to have been seen in nearly every part of the West, but its existence was doubtless one of those myths which always abound in a country not yet reduced to a matter-of-fact civilization.

The horse of the Indian was an animal of the greatest usefulness to the tribes, as indeed it has been to the human race in all ages. The Indian pony was an inferior animal to the breeds which have been developed in civilized communities, but it was nevertheless strong and enduring, and seemed to fit in perfectly with the Indian's mode of life. So important were these animals that their capture or theft was considered the greatest object of Indian wars and forays, and innumerable were the hostile encounters of which they have been the cause.

The importance of the horse in the business of the fur trade can scarcely be overestimated. Except in the immediate vicinity of the Missouri river it was the universal reliance for transportation. It was the hunter's inseparable companion, and its loss was about the greatest calamity he could suffer. Many a promising venture has ended in disaster because of the loss of horses. The guarding of these animals against the cunning wiles of the Indians was an object of never-ending solicitude, and many were the lives lost in repelling attempts to steal them.

Scarcely less in importance to the Indian than the horse was the DOG, a long, slender, wolfish animal, whose general appearance clearly denoted its consanguinity with the cowardly denizens of the plains. The Indian dog was an inseparable feature of Indian life. They were present in large numbers in every village, and white visitors found them an intolerable nuisance. Before the advent of horses among the Indians, dogs were used as beasts of burden, and continued to be so used in later times in the winter season, when they were the only animal that could successfully stand the long sled journeys over the snow. The flesh of the dog was the greatest delicacy the Indian could offer his guest, and all narratives of Western adventure abound in references to this hospitality so repugnant to the white man, but which he perforce must accept in order to avoid giving offence to his host.

This may be a proper place to consider the meaning of the term "game" as used by the hunters. It referred to those animals whose flesh was good for food, and which were regularly sought by the hunter for that purpose, and included not only several of the quadrupeds already noticed, but certain of the birds and fishes presently to be referred to. The presence of game in the different sections of the country was one of the most uncertain things that hunters or trappers had to consider, and its varying quantity at different times was a phenomenon which it is difficult to explain. At one time it was found in plenty; at another, in the same locality, it was impossible to find enough to save one from starvation. All books of early Western travel complain of the scarcity of game, some in this place, some in that. The truth seems to be that a migratory habit was characteristic of all game, and it did not remain in any fixed locality. Doubtless careful observation and study might have discovered the law of these movements, so that it could have been predicted where the game was most liable to be found at certain seasons. But this was never done, and the hunter was therefore always vibrating between plenty and want — this week luxuriating in the wealth of buffalo meat, and the next reduced to the very brink of starvation. A precarious sort of life was that which relied for subsistence solely upon the capture of game.

The winged portion of the animal creation in the Far West filled a very small place in the life of the hunter and trapper. In a land of large game, the hunting of birds had little attraction, for ordinarily meat could be much more easily procured from other sources. On the lower Missouri and in the southwest the wild turkey abounded, and was extensively used for food. Everywhere upon the water courses wild geese and the several varieties of ducks were met with and were often captured by the hunters when nothing better was at hand. The same was true of the numerous varieties of ground birds, such as the prairie chicken, sage hens, grouse, pheasants, and the like. For the capture of winged game, whether birds of the bush or water fowl, the hunters attached to the large parties regularly carried fowling pieces.

As to the other birds, they have no practical connection with the business of the fur trade. The swan, eagle, crane, hawk, raven, magpie, and buzzard abounded, some very generally, others in certain localities, but the hunter had little use for them, unless he sought to imitate the Indian by ornamenting his person with their plumes and feathers.

Fishes, likewise, with few exceptions, were of small importance in fur trade history. The numerous species that inhabited the Missouri were used to a considerable extent at the trading posts. The mountain trout, where they could be found, were also used in times of necessity. For the most part, however, the catching of fish was pretty tame sport, and never a substantial resource for food.

The principal exception to this general rule was the SALMON *(Oncorhynchus chavicha)*, whose home was on the Columbia and its tributaries. This wonderful fish was to the tribes of the lower Columbia what the buffalo was to those on the plains, so far at least as it was possible for one to supply the place of the other. The salmon, of which there were several varieties on the Columbia, was a large fish, weighing from fifteen to twenty-five pounds, with frequent specimens of a much larger size. The shape of the fish and the color of the flesh are well known. Its muscular power was very great, and was called into constant play in its attempts to ascend the rapids of the rivers. The chief characteristic of the salmon that has a practical interest in this connection is its ascent of the river in the spawning season, for it is this that gives the fisherman a chance to exercise his trade to great advantage. The salmon begin to ascend the river in the month of April, and so vast are its numbers that one reputable author, who wrote from personal observation, declared that it would be as easy to count the pebbles on the beach as the fish in the water. The Columbia and its tributaries are obstructed with frequent cataracts and cascades. Here the salmon find great difficulty in ascending, and here they display the great muscular strength which they possess. The delay in climbing these rapids causes them to accumulate in great numbers immediately below, and at these places the fishermen gather to take them. Some of the cascades, like the Salmon Falls on the Snake river, have been famous fishing points from the earliest times. In their long journey up these difficult rivers, the labor of ascent wastes their flesh, and their bodies become scarred from contact with the rocks, until by the time they reach the upper rivers they are reduced to mere skeletons, covered over with the mutilations they have undergone.

The salmon, having reached the remotest headwaters of the tributaries, brings forth its young, and never again, it is said, descends to the sea. But the young descend in the fall, and after a period of four years, according to some authorities, themselves ascend the river to the place of their birth, which in turn becomes the place where they die. It is indeed an interesting order of life, that of the salmon of the Columbia river, and it has always had a great attraction for observers of nature.

To the tribes of the lower Columbia, the salmon was the principal source of subsistence. Even to the Nez Perces and the Shoshones, in the valleys of the Snake and Salmon rivers, it was a great reliance, although those tribes depended also upon other game. The Indians took the salmon with a kind of seine or basket, and also with the spear, and during the fishing season they gathered in great numbers at the fishing points, camping along the banks, and covering the rocks around with their spears and nets. Not only did the Indians live on these fish during the fishing season, but they collected a store sufficient for the rest of the year. They had a very effectual method of preparing it, similar to that of preparing pemmican, another evidence that neither canned beef nor canned salmon is a strictly modern invention.

The salmon has become a great article of commerce, and fortunately it cannot be exterminated as the buffalo has been, although it is said to have been greatly reduced in numbers.

Among reptiles we shall notice only the RATTLESNAKE *(Crotalus confluentus)* as the single species that played any part of note in the life of the hunter and trapper. The fatal character of the bite of the rattlesnake caused it to be regarded with a degree of dread quite out of proportion to the real danger. Deaths from its bites were of the greatest rarity, particularly among men. Mules and horses more frequently suffered. But there were enough of these incidents to inspire a respectful dread of the loathsome animal, and it was really more of a terror than the grizzly itself. Mountaineers who never quailed before a "white bear" were completely unnerved by the sound of the stealthy rattle, and nothing in all their experience was so abhorrent as the suspicion that this subtle creature was creeping into bed, even if with no other purpose than to avail itself of the warmth of the hunter's body. In many localities these snakes swarmed in prodigious numbers. Generally they dwelt in crevices in the rocks, and it was not uncommon to find them by the hundreds basking in the sun. On the prairies they were mostly found at the prairie dog villages, not from any probable affinity for that animal, but because its burrows afforded a convenient lodging.

The size of the rattlesnake varied from two to six feet in length. Its distinguishing features were its brownish spotted color, its teeth, which consisted of two fangs in the upper jaw, through which was emitted the fatal poison; its rattles, which were at the end of the tail, and which gave an infallible warning of its presence never to be mistaken by one who had heard it; and the peculiar spiral coil into which it threw itself whenever it attempted to strike or bite.

The rattlesnake was not an aggressive reptile, and there is no evidence that it ever attacked without provocation, although the provocation might be wholly unintentional on the part of the offender. Accidents from these snakes most often occurred from coming upon them unawares, stepping upon them, or otherwise interfering with their liberty.

The skin of the rattlesnake and its teeth and rattles were often used for ornamentation, while its flesh was occasionally used for food, when necessity compelled a resort to it. By some it was considered a delicacy, and it was a common saying that, but for the repulsiveness of the reptile itself, its flesh would rank with that of other animals.

Besides the rattlesnakes, the lizards, horned frogs, and similar reptiles are mentioned by the writers in the early times, but they played no important part in the life of the trapper.

Among insects, by far the most important, because of its intolerable annoyances, was the MOSQUITO *(Culex mosquito)*. Scarcely any other member of the animal kingdom received more attention than this from the early traveler. It abounded everywhere except upon the naked prairie, and was particularly numerous in those places which were most frequented by man, the river valleys and the forests which lined the streams. So fierce and incessant were their attacks that at times they completely absorbed the energies of individuals, and have been known to cause the death of horses.

Strange as it may seem, their strength and voracity increase with the latitude, and they are more terrible the farther north they are met. It is as if all their energies were concentrated into the shorter season, and that their power increased inversely with the length of time in which it was exercised. With these explanations the reader of the literature of this period will be less inclined to belittle the virility of the mountaineer and explorer for giving so much space to the consideration of so diminutive a creature. He will see how far-reaching may be its influence when it destroys the aim of the rifle, interferes with the explorer when making important observations, causes the pilot to let slip his wheel in dangerous places, to say nothing of destroying sleep and so inflaming the skin as to unfit one for work. Of all the pests of the prairies the mosquito was incomparably the worst. With it must also be classed the various kinds of flies that annoyed the horses at certain seasons.

In the Great Basin the more degraded nations used ANTS for food. They were collected in large quantities, washed free from the dirt in which their mounds were built, and then crushed into a kind of pastry, which was much relished by the Indians. It is also recorded that these insects were frequently eaten alive by the handful as scooped up from the anthills.

Father De Smet gives an entertaining account of the use which these same Indians make of GRASSHOPPERS and of their method of catching them. They begin by digging a hole ten or twelve feet in diameter and four or five feet deep. They then take long branchs of sage brush and surround a field of three or four acres, more or less, according to the number of persons engaged in the work. They stand about twenty feet apart and commence by thrashing the ground to frighten up the grasshoppers, thus continually driving them towards the pit, until all fall into it. It often happens that a few acres will yield enough of these insects to fill the hole prepared for them. "They [the Indians] have their tastes like other people" observes Father De Smet. "Some eat the grasshoppers in soup; others mash them and make a kind of pie of them, which they harden or bake in the sun or dry by a fire; others still take pointed sticks, on which they string the larger grasshoppers, and as fast as they are sufficiently roasted the poor Indians regale themselves until the repast is entirely consumed."

Another interesting insect that played no inconsiderable rôle in the pioneer period of the country along the lower half of the Missouri river, was the common HONEY BEE. Like the white man, the bee was an intruder into these remote solitudes, where he preceded the settler by only a few years. The Indians were accustomed to say that they could tell that the white man's advance was near wherever the honey bee came. The abundance of these insects was astonishing, if we may accept the many corroborated accounts of explorers. Their hive was almost always in hollow trees, occasionally, however, in hollows of rocky bluffs. So plentiful were the "bee trees" in early times that search for them in certain localities was as much a part of the hunter's labor as was the search for game. Honey was a common article of food on the frontier and considerable quantities were at one time shipped to St. Louis.

CHAPTER VIII.

NATIVE TRIBES.

GENERAL OBSERVATIONS.

The predatory tribes — Their shelter, dress, etc. — Subsistence — Methods of life — Good fur gatherers — Their rovings — Permanent village tribes — Huts and villages — Convenience of villages for purposes of trade — Habitat of the stationary tribes — Routine life of the tribes — War; its terrible meaning to the Indian — Attraction of Indian life — Its unfortunate extinction — The Algonquian family — The Siouan family — The Shoshonean family — Other families — Importance of ethnic relations in the life of the tribes.

THE trans-Mississippi Indian differed in no essential particular from his Eastern brother. Such differences as there were were those of environment, and these had not continued long enough to develop permanent characteristics. The denizen of the treeless prairies must needs have led a somewhat different life from him of the Eastern forest, but not so different that either would have found it difficult to adapt himself to the situation of the other. It thus happened that the frontiersman of Kentucky or Illinois, who had been reared in the midst of savage neighbors, found his experience perfectly adapted to the changed conditions of the Western plains in his onward march beyond the confines of civilization. The Indian there was like the Indian with whom he was already familiar, and his fertility of resource quickly made him master of the new situation.

Before taking up a consideration of the separate tribes with which the trader had to do, it will be well to note those general characteristics which were common to most of them. The greater part of the Western tribes were wandering or predatory, while a few along the Missouri valley and in the southwest dwelt in permanent villages. Even the predatory tribes had their particular habitat or country, to which they always returned from their excursions, but they were essentially a nomadic people, moving from place to place, and making long journeys for the purposes of the chase or of war.

The shelter of the predatory tribes consisted of the immemorial conical tent or tepee, which was made of poles and skins. The poles rested on the ground on the circumference of a circle, and were bound together in a sheaf near the top, leaving a small section of the upper nappe of the cone projecting into the air. Upon this framework was stretched a covering made of buffalo skins. A hole was left at the top for the egress of smoke from the fire, which was built in the center of the lodge. A small, low door was provided by drawing up from the ground the flap of one of the skins. This simply-constructed shelter was exceedingly comfortable as tents go, and was set up, taken down, packed and moved with remarkable facility.

The Indian's clothing, before the white man came, was made almost exclusively of skins, and was ornamented with feathers, the teeth of animals, and numberless other gewgaws, which were obtained from a variety of sources. His feet were shod in leather moccasins, and heavy robes gave him the extra protection which the colder seasons required. In the summer he wore very little clothing, and his children practically none. He painted his body in the most grotesque and repulsive manner, and, among some tribes, even resorted to mutilation or deformation. After the trader came, the cloth blanket largely replaced the skin robe as an article of apparel.

An Indian chief, decked out in all the finery which savage ingenuity could devise, was, according to all accounts, an imposing personage. His wild and motley apparel struck the imagination of the hunters, and they always sought to imitate it in their own dress. It is related that the free hunter was never more satisfied than when he had made this imitation so perfect that he was taken for an Indian.

The wandering tribes, and even those who dwelt in permanent villages, were mostly expert horsemen. The horse was exceedingly important to their manner of living; and the business of securing horses, which was mostly by theft from their neighbors, was their highest calling, with the exception of war, of which, indeed, it was generally the principal motive.

In moving from place to place, the impedimenta of the tribes were loaded by the squaws upon the characteristic travois — two long poles crossing over the horse's back and trailing on the ground behind him, with crosspieces fastened to them for supporting the load — and the camps were struck and pitched with marvelous facility and dispatch.

Their subsistence was mainly the fruit of the chase, for their migratory habits were not suited to agricultural pursuits. They were generally excellent hunters, and depended largely upon the buffalo for support. Their primitive weapons were the bow and arrow, but these were, to a great extent, replaced in later years by the more effective weapons introduced by the traders.

These Indians were good fur gatherers, and were always sought by the trader. Generally one or more posts were established in the heart of their territory, while itinerant traders were sent to accompany the various bands in their wanderings and trade for their furs as soon as they were taken.

As a general thing the wandering tribes were among the most stalwart and robust of their race, fond of the attractions of dress, haughty and even vainglorious on occasion, much given to pomp and bluster, yet withal stubborn fighters, and, as their subsequent history has proven, foemen worthy of the white man's steel. The extent of their rovings was very great, particularly those of the Crows and Blackfeet, who were met in almost every section of the West from the Spanish provinces to the British possessions.

At no other time were they so lawless and dangerous as in their raids into distant sections, especially if the purpose of their forays had not been successful.

Numbers of the Western tribes along the Missouri river had permanent villages where they spent most of their time and to which they returned from their excursions. The essential peculiarities which this difference in mode of life developed related mainly to shelter and food. These Indians had fixed huts of large size and stable construction. They were situated close together, without any very regular order, except that they were often set in a circular row with a considerable space in the center. The huts themselves were usually circular in shape with conical or slightly vaulted roofs. The outer walls were supported by a row of posts, and in the center were four longer posts with suitable cross timbers at the top to receive the upper ends of rafters of which the lower ends rested upon cross timbers supported by the outer posts. A brush wattling was spread over the rafters and sides of the hut, which were then covered with straw and thickly plastered with mud. The huts so made were very strong, as may be judged from the fact that the Indians frequently congregated upon them in considerable numbers.

The fire was built in the center of the lodge and a hole was left in the top for the egress of the smoke. The beds were arranged around the walls and were often covered with a canopy of skins. A whole family usually occupied a lodge, in which was also reserved a space for the horses when there was danger of capture. The articles belonging to the family were variously bestowed, and a single door, closed by a skin curtain, gave access alike to man and beast. Among some of the tribes the form of the huts was polygonal, the octagon being the usual figure, while by one tribe at least a rectangular form was used.

In regard to subsistence, permanent residence in fixed localities made possible the development of a crude agriculture, and around all these villages there were fields of corn, and the more common vegetables introduced by the white man. Although these tribes frequently made long excursions from home, their roamings were rarely so distant or diversified as those of other tribes. The Pawnees were possibly an exception to this rule, while the Aricaras were also fond of a predatory life.

The permanent village accommodated itself to the business of the fur trade much better than did the wandering village. It was a simple matter to maintain establishments where the places of abode were fixed, and posts were accordingly found at one time or another at or near all of these villages. These tribes, moreover, were more uniformly friendly to the whites than were those restless spirits whose very wanderings developed in them the character of freebooters and pirates. To this rule the Pawnees and Aricaras were the only exceptions.

The country of the stationary tribes in the immediate valley of the Missouri was simply that where their villages were located, and whenever they went beyond this they did so at the sufferance, or in defiance, of their neighbors. This was particularly true of the Minnetarees, the Mandans, and the Aricaras. The Pawnees and the Osages, on the other hand, were recognized as controlling a wide area of territory.

The routine life of the tribes, as it existed during the trapping era, was simple in its general scheme, but in detail full of incident and adventure. When in camp in the case of the predatory tribes, or when residing regularly in fixed villages, the life was a quiet one, filled up largely with the work of the women, the sports of the children, and the gossip and interchange of views of the men. When the season came for laying up a supply of food, as when the buffalo drew near, great preparations were made both for the sport of hunting and for the care of the meat. These were seasons of activity and excitement as well as of hard work, and the subsequent comfort of the village depended on how well the work was done. Moreover the gathering of robes was the Indian's great source of revenue, and he had a care to lay in a goodly store for trade whenever he should go to the company's posts, or their traders should come to reside with him.

The tribes often had, however, more serious work on hand than that of providing subsistence and securing robes and furs. Their enemies might be on the warpath, and their very existence might depend upon the most active and energetic measures of defense. It is difficult to realize what a mighty question this was to the Indian. War among civilized countries is terrible, but with them prisoners are not killed, private property is supposed to be respected, non-combatants are left uninjured, and only such destruction of life and property is permitted as is necessary for the direct crippling of the enemy's military power. Not so in the wars of the Indian. His theory of war was extermination. Not only did he kill all he could in battle, but he slew his prisoners, destroyed his enemy's property, whether of a military character or not, carried off or killed his women and children. War, therefore, had a terrible meaning to the Indian, and the attack of an enemy was like a destroying whirlwind, spreading ruin and devastation in its path.

But the Indian did not always await the onslaught of his enemy. The village was frequently called upon to depart on some perilous enterprise of war to avenge the death of some of their number or to secure such spoils as they might find. Then, too, they made frequent excursions on peaceful errands, as when they visited friendly tribes, or sought some locality where buffalo were plenty, or went to a timbered section to find poles for their lodges. There were, in short, in the Indian's mode of life, demands of business quite as imperious to him as were those of civilized life to his pale-face brother.

That the white man found much to his taste in the wild, free life of the Indian is amply proven by the willingness with which so many abandoned the blessings of civilization for the hardships of the wilderness. There was in the Indian character and manner of life much to admire. In spite of the absence of the ideals of civilized life, in spite of revolting uncleanliness, loose and dissolute habits, and an utter absence of mercy toward an enemy — in spite of the fact that the Indian was a true savage, he was nevertheless not disliked by those who knew him most nearly. Since he was first known he has been admired for his rude eloquence, his deeply religious nature, his fine sense of right and justice, his steadfastness to his friends, his wild and manly sports, his love of the chase, and his bravery in war. It will ever be a source of poignant regret among the millions of those who helped despoil him of his country, and who look with pity upon a fate which they were powerless to avert, that there could not have been reserved in all this vast continent a true home for the Indian — a place where he could have led the life he used to lead when he chased the deer and buffalo, trapped the cunning beaver, and made war upon his enemies. Such was the life for which alone he was fitted, and we have yet to see any departure from it that has not resulted disastrously to his race.

The tribes with which this work has mainly to do belonged, with few exceptions, to three great linguistic stocks — the Algonquian, the Siouan, and the Shoshonean.

The Algonquian family was distinguished for noble tribes, stalwart warriors, and a high type of aboriginal development. It occupied some of the fairest portions of North America, both East and West. Its western territory extended from the Great Lakes to the Rocky mountains and lay mainly in what is now British territory. Those tribes which resided wholly or in part within the territorial limits of the United States were the Arapahoes, the Cheyennes, the Blackfeet, and the Grosventres of the Prairie.

The most important of all the linguistic stocks to the purposes of this investigation was the Siouan. It occupied nearly the whole of the immediate valley of the Missouri, with a wide extent of territory on either side. It was a well-developed race both intellectually and physically, and in its individuals the Indian was seen in his purest type. Among the well-known tribes of this family which figured prominently in the American fur trade were the Crows, the Assiniboines, the Minnetarees, the Mandans, the Sioux, the Poncas, the Omahas, the Iowas, the Otoes, the Kansas, the Osages, and the extinct tribe from which the great river takes its name, the Missouris.

The Shoshonean family dwelt in the Great Basin and in the valleys of the Snake river and the Colorado of the West, with one wandering tribe in the plains. While it included some of the most virile tribes, it included also some of the most degraded and pitiable upon the continent. Those with which we shall here come in contact were the Shoshones or Snakes, the Utahs, the Pai-Utes or Diggers, the Bannocks, and the Sheepeaters — all mountain tribes — and the Comanches who roamed over the prairies on the south side of the Arkansas.

Besides these three important families there were the Caddoan, represented by the Pawnees and the Aricaras; the Kiowan, by the Kiowas; the Athapascan, by the Apaches and the Navajoes; three different stocks, represented by the Pueblos; the Shahaptian, whose principal tribe was the Nez Perces; and the Salishan, which included the Flatheads. There were also many other stocks in the country along the Pacific coast, but they were outside of the theater of the American fur trade.

A knowledge of the ethnic relations of the various tribes is of practical value in explaining certain peculiarities of Indian history, even in those early days when the commercial mind of the trader never dwelt upon such matters. The various alliances among the tribes usually followed these ancestral relationships. How it was that the Aricaras and the Cheyennes were preëminently the horse-dealing tribes among the northern Indians may be understood when it is known that their kindred, the Pawnees and the Arapahoes, with whom they were on terms of friendly intercourse, dwelt in or roamed over the country where the mustang flourished. The ubiquitous wanderings of that terrible tribe, the Grosventres of the Prairie, throughout the country to the south of their own, are explained when it is remembered that these Indians were closely related to the Arapahoes, and were wont to make frequent excursions to the country of that tribe. Other equally important deductions will reward the labor of the student who takes pains to bear these relationships in mind.[1]

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[1] Before taking up the following brief account of the various tribes of the West, it will be well to remind the reader of what was said in the preface to this work: That the purpose of these descriptions is not to present an exhaustive technical treatment of the subjects considered, but solely to show their relation to the business of the fur trade. Into the boundless fields of the ethnography and archeology of the aborigines west of the Mississippi it is not intended to enter at all. The purpose here in view will have been attained if the reader is given a clear idea of that portion of the political history of the tribes which relates to their intercourse with the fur trader. It was in this intercourse that the Indian Question had its origin, and here began, for better or worse, that process which must eventually result in reducing the Indian to a civilized order of life.

CHAPTER IX.

NATIVE TRIBES

OF THE MISSOURI BASIN.

The Blackfeet — Their territory — Origin of name — Division of the tribe — The Grosventres of the Prairie — Habitat of the various Blackfoot bands — Importance of the Blackfeet to the traders — Characteristics of the tribe — The Crows — The Crow country — Characteristics of the tribe — Relation to the traders — Their horse-stealing propensities — The Assiniboines — The Minnetarees — The Mandans — The Aricaras — Their history — Their treachery — Their staples of trade — The Sioux nations — History — Characteristics — The Yanktons — The Yanktonais — The Tetons — Importance of the Sioux tribes to the trader — Their attitude toward the traders — The Cheyennes — Tribal history — Characteristics — Great horse dealers — The Pawnees — Tribal history — Relation of Pawnee Loups to Aricaras — Characteristics of the Pawnees — Under Spanish influence — Relations with the traders — Lower Missouri tribes — The Poncas — The Omahas — The Kansas — The Osages — The Iowas — The Otoes — The Missouris.

THE BLACKFEET *(Algonquian)*.

COMING now to a more detailed enumeration of the various tribes, the first to arrest our attention is that of the terrible Blackfeet, the scourge of the upper Missouri country during the whole of the period considered in this work. The territory of the Blackfeet was the watershed of the Missouri above the mouth of, and including, the Milk river, although it may be a doubtful question if the territory above the Three Forks ought not rather to be considered as common or fighting ground of the various tribes. The heart of the Blackfoot country may be taken as in the immediate valley of the Missouri near the mouth of the Marias, where the river makes its great bend from north to east.

There were included under the general term Blackfeet four distinct bands: the Blackfeet proper *(Siksikau)*, the Piegan *(Pikuni)*, the Bloods *(Kainah)*, and the Grosventres of the Prairies or the Falls Indians *(Atsina)*, numbering all told about 14,000 souls. Early writers mention also the Surcies and the Little Robes, but these two bands were not prominent in the tribal history of the nation. By the fur traders these Indians were all included under the general term Blackfeet,[1] for they dwelt in the same country, spoke similar dialects, and much resembled each other in personal appearance. But to those well acquainted with them there was always a well-recognized distinction. With two of the bands in particular the trader became intimately acquainted, although for exactly opposite reasons. The Piegans were peaceably disposed to the whites as a general thing, and the first successful trading post established in Blackfoot territory was built at the mouth of the Marias river, the usual habitat of this band, and was honored with their name. It was with the Piegans that the principal trade in this part of the country was conducted.[2]

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[1] The origin of the name "Blackfeet" is said by tradition to arise from the fact that in some of the tribal disputes of this nation the Siksikau separated from the rest of the tribe, then on the Saskatchewan river or even further north, and resolved to take up their new abode in the south. It was in the fall of the year when they reached the valley of the Missouri, and prairie fires had swept the country in every direction. After traversing this burnt district until their moccasins were black with the ashes, they were met by a band of Crows, who, from their appearance, called them Blackfeet.

This tradition may not be entitled to any greater weight than the following which accounts for the bitter hostility of these Indians to the whites. When they first saw the effects of fire arms they were so much impressed that they wanted to know where they could procure some powder. They were told that it was a kind of grain, which, if sowed in the spring, would, like any other grain, multiply in the harvest. They procured a large quantity at great cost and made the experiment. Nothing could ever induce them afterwards to treat the white man as a friend.

[2] Kenneth McKenzie, in his account of the establishment of Fort Piegan says: "The Piegan band of the Blackfeet is warmly attached to our interests. They are the beaver hunters of their nation. The other bands trade robes and provisions principally."

The Grosventres of the Prairie, on the other hand, were the most relentlessly hostile tribe ever encountered by the whites in any part of the West, if not in any part of America, and the trapper always understood that to meet with one of these Indians meant instant and deadly hostility. The greater part of the many conflicts between the whites and the Blackfeet were with this tribe. Such was the case in the famous battle of Pierre's Hole in 1832. The origin of this hostility is traced in another chapter of this work,[3] but its long continuance is still without adequate explanation.

The tribal affinity of the Grosventres was with the Arapahoes, and the two tribes always maintained a feeling of friendship for each other. They once lived together with another kindred tribe, the Cheyennes, near the headwaters of the Mississippi and the Great Lakes. For some cause they migrated westward, the Cheyennes first branching off to the south, and later the Arapahoes to the southwest, while the Grosventres kept on to the west until they reached the foothills of the mountains. This close relationship between the Grosventres and the Arapahoes was a matter of great consequence in fur trading times. It was the custom of the Grosventres to visit their friends every two or three years. They went sometimes by way of the Crow country and the Black Hills, but generally by the headwaters of the Snake and Green rivers and the mountains of northern Colorado, in order to avoid the Crows, who were the most powerful and uncompromising of their enemies. As nearly all the intermediate tribes through whose country they passed were hostile to them, their excursions were always occasions for bloody conflicts. It was inevitable that the trappers who overspread this entire country should have frequent encounters with them, although it has puzzled many writers to understand why this band should have been met in such widely separated localities. It was on one of their return trips from the Arapahoes that they fought the trappers in Pierre's

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[3] Part IV., Chapter X.

Hole, as elsewhere narrated.[4] The name Grosventre, as applied to the large eastern tributary of Snake river in Jackson Hole, and also to a neighboring range of mountains, was given from the circumstance that the Grosventres passed along this stream on their way to the Arapahoes about the year 1830.

The Grosventres were also commonly called Falls Indians in this early day, from the fact, it is said, that they lived near the Falls of the Saskatchewan. In common usage they were called Blackfeet by the traders and trappers, and very few understood their true tribal relations. Their own language was very difficult to acquire, and as they understood the Blackfoot language they always used it in their intercourse with the whites. This tended further to confuse the distinctions between the two tribes, and accounts for the fact that so many of the hostile acts of the Grosventres were charged up to the account of the Blackfeet. Thus it has always been commonly understood that it was a Blackfoot Indian that Captain Lewis killed on his return from the Pacific in the summer of 1806, but it was, as a matter of fact, a Grosventre.

Next to the Grosventres, the Blood Indians were the most troublesome to the traders. They were bitterly hostile, but their wanderings did not so often bring them into contact with the whites. The Siksikau, or Blackfeet proper, were also very hostile.

As the several bands roamed over pretty much the same territory, it is difficult to say just what the usual habitat of each was; but, broadly speaking, the Siksikau dwelt northeast in the valley of Milk river; the Bloods near the sources of the Marias and Milk; the Piegans west of the Missouri along the lower course of the Marias; and the Grosventres along the south shore of the Missouri from the Great Falls to the Judith Basin, although some authorities place them north on the south fork of the Saskatchewan.

All of the Blackfoot bands belonged to the predatory class of Indians and their wanderings were very extensive. As they were hostile to nearly all the surrounding tribes, and as they were constantly invading their neighbors' territory, they lived in a state of perpetual warfare. Another source of trouble with their neighbors was the fact that the Judith Basin was one of the most popular buffalo regions in the entire West, and the tribes from beyond the mountains, such as the Snakes, Nez Perces, and Flatheads, annually repaired thither for their supply of meat. Such visits were more than likely to result in hostile encounters.

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[4] See Part IV., Chapter II.

For two reasons the Blackfeet Indians were of great importance in the fur trade: Their country was the richest beaver country of the West and the Indians themselves were the most hostile. Abundant riches and deadly peril were therefore the conflicting influences which actuated the bold invader of this coveted region. Every portion of it is marked by struggles, now mostly forgotten, between the whites and the natives, and history will never know how many of the early trappers fell before the savage hatred of this terrible tribe.

The Blackfeet were splendid examples of their race, well formed physically, fond of athletic sports, excellent horsemen, great hunters, proud of the gaudy ornaments of dress, inordinately fond of liquor and gambling, addicted to the usual native vices of filth, beggary, and small thieving — in short they were true savages so far as that term can be properly applied to the aboriginal American. Their reputation for courage — even of the native quality — has been disputed, but their almost continuous record of war shows that they were not afraid of battle.

It seems most unfortunate that a better understanding could not have been brought about at an early date between the Blackfeet and the whites. The common verdict of those who became acquainted with these Indians on a peaceable footing is that they were a very tractable and intelligent tribe to get along with, and later experience confirms this view. But in some way the key to the situation could not be found until a score of years had left its record of bloodshed upon the history of this region.

THE CROWS *(Siouan)*.

These Indians, with the Minnetarees, belonged to the Hidatsa sub-stock of the Siouan family. The native name of this tribe is Absaroka, which is said to signify a species of hawk. The French translated it *Corbeau* and called the tribe *les Corbeaux*. The translation of this name into English gives the designation by which these Indians have been universally known, since the white man found them. Although modern writers divide the tribe into different bands, particularly the Crows proper and the mountain Crows, these distinctions never obtained among the trappers. The tribe was not numerous and probably did not number over 10,000 souls in its best days. Their country, always so known, the true Absaroka, or home of the Crows, was the valley and watershed of the Bighorn river. It extended, to be sure, considerably to the eastward, and may be said to have included the valleys of the Rosebud, Tongue, and Powder rivers, and also a strip of territory on the north bank of the Yellowstone. But still, when mention was made of the "Crow country," the valley of the Bighorn was always meant, the heart of Absaroka being in the lower portion of the valley near the mouth of the Little Bighorn.

The Crows were considered to be the best formed physically of any of the Western Indians. Tall, graceful, pleasing in physiognomy, they were exceptionally fine looking. In dress and ornamentation likewise they excelled most other tribes. They made a particular point of developing long hair, which they regarded as a great ornament. But however much they might excel other tribes in physical development, they were in no degree behind them in the vices and defects of Indian character.

The Crows were the equestrian tribe of the Missouri valley. In proportion to their numbers they possessed more and better horses than any other. They were the most expert of horse stealers and the most skilful robbers among the Missouri tribes. For this reason, rather than on account of any hostile intent, they caused a great deal of trouble to the traders in every part of the West. They always professed friendship for the whites and usually were peaceably disposed toward them. There is in fact almost no record of their having killed white men or having made war against them; but very many instances of their having committed robberies upon them.

The principal enemies of the Crows were the Sioux and Blackfeet. With the latter tribe they were never at peace in the early days, and the history of their relations to each other is one of unremitting hostility. The allies of the Crows were the Minnetarees and the Mandans.

A peculiarity of the Crow nation was their fondness for having white men among them. In the cases of Edward Rose and James P. Beckwourth the tribe adopted them, made them chiefs, and no doubt profited greatly from their leadership. There is no other tribe whose history is so full of romantic adventure, and the country of no other so abounded in the wildness and weirdness as well as the beauty of nature.

The Crows were exclusively a wandering tribe, never having lived in fixed villages. They were encountered by trappers in almost every part of the trans-Mississippi region. They were great buffalo hunters and the fur companies regarded them as the best robe producers of any of the Indian tribes. They were, however, very exacting, and gave the traders no little trouble to satisfy their whims in the matter of trading posts. The American Fur Company in the course of twenty years built four posts for their accommodation, and the Missouri Fur Company two; but the Indians were never satisfied and wanted the location changed continually. The method of trading which proved most satisfactory was to send traders with small outfits of merchandise to reside in the villages, moving from place to place as the Indians moved, and by their presence encouraging them to make robes.

THE ASSINIBOINES *(Siouan)*.

These Indians were true representatives of the Siouan stock and even called themselves by the native family name, Dakota, or Nakota, as they more commonly pronounced it. During the best days of the fur trade they numbered some 28,000 souls. Their territory bordered on the Missouri river from the mouth of Milk river to below the mouth of the Yellowstone and thence extended north to the Saskatchewan and east to the Assiniboine river. It lay mostly outside what is now the territory of the United States. The tribe comprised no fewer than eight distinct bands, some of which are often mentioned in the fur trade correspondence.

The Assiniboines resembled closely the other Sioux tribes — tall, rather slender, with broad faces and high cheek bones. Their clothes were the usual leathern make of the plains Indians, and a characteristic feature was the headdress adorned with two horns. The ornamentation was in other particulars similar to that of other Indians. Although armed to some extent in these times with guns, they all had bows and arrows.

They were a wandering tribe of Indians, living in movable tents, and their chief resource for subsistence was the buffalo. They were very expert in driving the buffalo into the parks or pens which have already been referred to. There was a noted enclosure of this sort within ten miles of Fort Union and around it were the bones of thousands of buffalo slain there.

The Assiniboines were an equestrian tribe, though not so well supplied with horses in these early times as were some of their neighbors. Like all other tribes they considered horse stealing a legitimate business.

They were generally friendly to the whites, though not to be trusted, and they did not scruple to rob when they could do so with impunity. They were good robe-makers and were an important tribe to the traders. Fort Union, which was in their territory, was their great trading point.

As this tribe, like the Blackfeet, resided in both American and British territory, there was sharp competition for their custom on both sides of the line; and much of the complaint of the American traders about the use of liquor by the British related to its use among these Indians.

THE MINNETAREES *(Siouan)*.

These Indians were also commonly known as the Grosventres of the Missouri, the last three words being added to distinguish the name from that of the Grosventres of the Prairie *(Algonquian)*. There was nothing in the physical characteristics of either of the tribes to justify the name. Minnetaree is the name by which the Mandans called these Indians. It was always spelled as here given in the early years, but the modern official orthography is Minitari. The true tribal name was Hidatsa, but it was formerly rarely heard in popular use.

Under the name Hidatsa the Minnetarees and the Crows were once united in a single sub-stock of the great Siouan family. They migrated from the southeast at some not very remote period, and, for causes not clearly understood, separated, the Minnetarees stopping near the Mandans on the Missouri, and the Crows moving farther to the westward. It is probable that the origin of their distinctive tribal names arose in some way from this separation.

After this event the Minnetarees gradually abandoned the wandering life and settled down in permanent villages like the Mandans, from whom, through long association, they adopted many customs. Their huts were of the same general pattern as those of their new neighbors, and like the latter they had separate villages for summer and winter use. Their home was on the right bank of the Missouri near the mouth of Knife river. At the time of the visit of Lewis and Clark their number was estimated at 2,500 souls.

Early writers describe the Minnetarees as the tallest and best formed of the Missouri Indians, excepting only their kindred, the Crows. They delighted in elegance of costume and made use of all the ornamentation characteristic of Indian ingenuity in these matters.

They were generally friendly to the traders, although there are records of some outrages committed by them. There were two or three posts in their neighborhood at one time and another, but they were later all merged in the large post of Fort Clark, which accommodated both their own trade and that of the Mandans.

The Minnetarees found their natural allies in the Crows and Mandans, and although liable to frequent misunderstandings with other tribes, their record is not that of a warlike nation.

THE MANDANS *(Siouan)*.

Of no other tribe of the Missouri valley are there extant so many complete and circumstantial accounts by early writers as of the Mandans. This arose from the fact that the situation where the tribe has dwelt since it became known to white men was one of great strategic and commercial importance. Its relation to the surrounding country has been explained in another place. It was for many years the farthest point to which the operations of the traders were carried up the Missouri and the tribe thus became familiarly known to the fur companies both north and south of the national boundary. Travelers likewise in these remote regions rarely got beyond the Mandans prior to 1830 and naturally devoted a great deal of attention to the tribe where they turned back on their expeditions. Thus from one cause or another these Indians received a large share of attention from the earlier explorers of the Missouri valley.

The tribal history of the Mandans is exceedingly obscure; but one fact stands out with only too great certainty, and that is their terrible misfortunes as a result of their contact with the white race. Our first knowledge of them locates them on the Missouri river considerably below their later location, where they dwelt in nine villages, two on the west shore and seven on the east. They must have numbered at that time at least 6,000 souls. The hostility of the Assiniboines and Sioux through many years gradually depleted their numbers, while the smallpox on different occasions made such terrible havoc among them as to threaten their extermination. The different bands consolidated with one another as the tribe diminished, until at the time of the visit of Lewis and Clark there were only two villages numbering between 1,500 and 2,000 occupants. It was in this situation that they were found by the traders who came first from the British companies and later up the Missouri from St. Louis. In 1837 the tribe experienced its last visitation of the smallpox, which carried off all but about thirty of its people. This terrible calamity, which resulted in the almost complete extermination of an interesting and important Indian tribe, is described in another part of this work.

The Mandans were a prominent example of stationary tribes living in permanent villages. They had separate villages for summer and winter use, the latter being located in the forest where it was better protected from the fierce blizzards of the northern prairies. The winter village was occupied about four months of the year.

These Indians were an agricultural tribe, if that term can be appropriately applied to the crude method by which the natives cultivated the soil. Their principal product was the maize, but they also raised certain vegetables introduced by the whites.

Their main reliance for subsistence was, of course, the buffalo. Their country was in the very heart of the buffalo range and at certain seasons these animals roamed in countless thousands over the surrounding hills. At such times they were taken in great numbers without difficulty. At other times it was necessary to make long excursions to find them.

Physically the Mandans were rather above the average Indian in stature, though scarcely the equals in this respect of the Minnetarees and Crows. They were robust and broad-shouldered. Their countenances were not so striking in the aquiline nose and high cheek bone as the other Siouan tribes. The eyes were dark brown, the mouth and jaw broad, the hair long and black and cultivated to great length. A greyish mixture was very common in the hair of many and was a characteristic feature. The teeth were fine and remarkably permanent, even in old age. The complexion was of a brown, copperish tinge, although in many individuals it approached white very nearly. The women were short, robust, and not handsome even for Indian women. The men were notoriously vain in matters of dress, and exercised great ingenuity in ornamentation.

The Mandans were a peaceably disposed tribe and were always on terms of friendship with the whites. The Sioux and Assiniboines were their enemies and the Crows and Minnetarees their allies. The traders always maintained one or more posts in their neighborhood. Their chief staples of trade were the robes and tongues of the buffalo, but they also collected a large amount of beaver fur.

THE ARICARAS *(Caddoan)*.

Next to the Blackfeet the Aricaras were more dreaded by the whites than any other northern tribe. Though not so continuously hostile as the Blackfeet they were more treacherous, and the outrages and loss of life suffered at their hands form a mournful chapter in the history of the Missouri Valley.

The Aricaras, commonly called Rees by the traders, were one of the principal divisions of the Caddoan family whose pristine habitat seems to have been in the vicinity of the Red river of the Natchitoches. In their migration north the Pawnees and the Aricaras parted company, the former settling down on the waters of the Kansas and Platte rivers, and the latter going north to the heart of the Sioux country on the Missouri. The tribe was once much more numerous than when it became known to the traders, and the remains of its ancient villages can be traced all the way from the Niobrara to the Cannon Ball river along the shores of the Missouri. The Aricaras claimed no particular country except that which they actually occupied. At the time of the voyage of Lewis and Clark they probably numbered 3,600 souls.

Prior to 1830 they lived in clay huts similar to those of the Mandans and Pawnees, but in this and other matters they resembled more closely the former tribe, though kindred to the latter. In physical appearance they were tall and well formed, and their women were considered the handsomest on the Missouri. In their manner of life they did not differ essentially from the tribes among whom they dwelt and with nearly all of whom they were on terms of hostility, if not of actual war.

The principal characteristic of the Aricara Indians, so far as it relates to the fur trade, was their treacherous and warlike attitude toward the whites. What can have been the cause of their bad faith and their many atrocities has always been a mystery. They were friends today and enemies tomorrow. One party of trappers they would treat with hospitality; the next they would seek to destroy. After Colonel Leavenworth's campaign, which was supposed to have subdued them, they became more troublesome than ever before. They abandoned their old villages and moved up to the neighborhood of the Mandans. They soon returned, however, and some years later migrated, it is said, to the North Platte. It was their depredations and murders committed upon trading parties in that region that induced N. J. Wyeth and others in 1833 to return from Green river to the States by way of the Bighorn, Yellowstone and Missouri rather than risk the journey across the plains; and also led to the military expedition to the upper Platte under Colonel Dodge in 1835.

The Aricaras were, in spite of their character for duplicity, useful Indians to the traders, who always had a post among them when they resided on the Missouri. They were good robe-makers and beaver hunters, but their chief staple of trade was horses; and it was from them that the traders obtained a goodly part of their supply. The overland Astorian party in 1811 outfitted with horses at their villages and General Ashley did the same thing in 1823 just before his disastrous experience at their hands.

THE SIOUX NATIONS *(Siouan).*

In popular usage the term Sioux was restricted to the tribes of the Siouan stock who dwelt in the "Land of the Dakotas" and who, in their own language, were called by the name Dakota. The term Sioux was of Algonquian origin, "expressing enmity or contempt," and through the medium of the Canadian French descended upon the Dakota tribes in its present corrupted form.

The Sioux undoubtedly came from the eastward and reached their historic habitat in comparatively late prehistoric times. When they became known to the traders in the latter part of the 18th century their country embraced what is now the state of South Dakota with contiguous territory all around its borders. The population of those tribes who dwelt in the valley of the Missouri cannot have exceeded at that time 15,000 souls.

In physical appearance the Sioux were true Indians, the characteristics of the race being especially marked in them. Although not so fine looking and well formed as the Minnetarees and Crows, they were nevertheless of stalwart physique and great physical power. They were mostly of medium stature, slender yet muscular, with oval features, prominent cheek bones and slightly aquiline nose. They wore long hair braided to the full length, although in some of the bands the custom prevailed of shaving off the hair except a tuft on the top of the head.

The Sioux were typical plains Indians and presented in the highest degree the characteristics which aboriginal life on the prairies developed. They were exclusively a nomadic people and their wanderings extended far beyond their proper country; but they were not the equals in this respect of the Crows and Blackfeet. They were among the most warlike and aggressive of the Western tribes and were everywhere held in terror by their enemies. All of their neighbors, such as the Omahas, the Aricaras, the Cheyennes, the Mandans, and the Minnetarees, suffered calamities at their hands from which they never recovered.

There were three important divisions of the Sioux tribes with which the Missouri traders had to do — the Yanktons, the Yanktonais, and the Tetons.

The Yanktons lived in the southern portion of the Sioux territory along the Missouri river in the valleys of the James, the Vermilion, and the Big Sioux, and even as far east as the headwaters of the Des Moines. They numbered about 1,000 people. They were the least troublesome of all the Sioux tribes and gave the traders comparatively little annoyance. Posts were maintained at different times for their convenience at the mouth of each of the tributaries of the Missouri mentioned above.

The Yanktonais, or Yanktons of the Plains, occupied the upper valleys of the James and Big Sioux rivers, and even that of the Red River of the North on the east and a long stretch of the Missouri valley on the west. They numbered about 2,500 souls. They were on the whole the most dreaded by the traders of any of the Sioux tribes. They were treacherous, stealthy, vindictive, and caused a great deal of trouble. It was a frequent pastime with them to fire from some secure hiding place upon boats passing along the river. Small parties were never safe in their country, while the loss of life and property at their hands during the period of the fur trade was such as to cause never-ending solicitude on the part of those who did business among them.

The modern classification gives two divisions of the Yanktonais, the Upper and the Lower; but one never finds this distinction in the literature of the fur trade era. There

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(See page 304.)

was a Sioux band, then well known, but now not recognized, the Teton Saone, or simply the Saone, which may have been a part of the Yanktonais tribe. They resided on both sides of the Missouri in the section where Bismarck and Mandan now stand. It was presumably among these Indians that the "Sawon" post, so often mentioned in the journals and correspondence of the American Fur Company, was maintained.

The Tetons were a very important tribe of the Sioux and numbered about 5,000 souls. They dwelt mostly west of the Missouri and overspread the country as far west as to the Black Hills and the North Platte, while they ranged north and south from the Pawnee country to the Mandans. Like the Yanktonais they were exceedingly troublesome in the early years of the fur trade and greatly annoyed boat parties ascending the river. So far did they interfere with navigation that they came to be known as the pirates of the Missouri. The Tetons, however, dropped their hostile attitude much sooner than did the Yanktonais, and in later years gave the traders little or no trouble.

The Tetons embraced several distinct bands, with each of which trading posts or houses were maintained. These bands were the Bois Brulés, who lived on both sides of the Missouri near the mouths of the White and Teton rivers; the Sans Arcs; the Blackfeet *(Sihasapa)*; the Minneconjous; the Two Kettles; the Ogallalas, who dwelt at the headwaters of the White and Niobrara rivers at the southeastern base of the Black Hills; and the Hunkpapas.

For several reasons the Sioux tribes were the most important of any with which the fur traders had to do. They were the most numerous. Their country was one continuous range for the buffalo who were wont to frequent every part of it. As a result the traffic in buffalo robes was exceedingly heavy, and the quantities of these peltries that were shipped from the Sioux country were very great. The Sioux were also good beaver hunters, and contributed great quantities of these finer kinds of fur. The various trading companies had posts all over their country from James river to the Black Hills, and the total number of these establishments, large and small, that were built during the fur trade era, would probably exceed one hundred. Fort Pierre, located nearly in the center of the Sioux country, was the greatest of these posts, and a very important establishment in its day.

But if the custom of the Sioux was a matter of great importance to the traders, the open hostility of some of the bands and the doubtful friendship of others were not less so. The location of the Sioux tribes on both sides of the Missouri placed the navigation and trade of the upper rivers very largely at their mercy. In the earlier expeditions the American traders met with much opposition from these Indians. They were at that time largely under British influence, and during the War of 1812 came very near taking sides against the United States. Then they were enemies of most of the tribes above them, and did not like to have the whites go up there to trade. Moreover, they acted to some extent as middlemen between the whites and those tribes, compelling the traffic to pass through their hands to their great advantage. They did not like to see this business interfered with. All these considerations, and the natural jealousy with which they saw the advent of the white men, made them regard the approach of the American traders with an unfriendly eye. More than once they turned back the early expeditions. But as time wore on and the traders became firmly established among them, this hostile feeling largely passed away. There is no doubt that if, at this time, a wise and judicious policy had been pursued towards these Indians, they might have been led to their new destiny without serious difficulty or misunderstanding. The Sioux were blessed beyond most tribes with sound practical sense. They knew that their former method of life could not endure and all that they asked was that, in the inevitable process of change, the government should keep its faith with them. When they saw the agents of the government year after year and decade after decade violating its promises, the smoldering fires of bitterness were fanned again into flame, until they burst into that terrible conflagration that raged so furiously in the decade around 1876.[5]

THE CHEYENNES *(Algonquian)*.

These Indians seem formerly to have been associated with the Arapahoes and the Atsina (Grosventres of the Prairie), and to have dwelt in what is now the state of Minnesota. Their western migration was probably under pressure from the Sioux, and their southern deflection from their western course was probably due to pressure from the Assiniboines, with whom they were never after at peace. Broken and dispirited with their accumulated misfortunes, they finally found an abiding place at the eastern base of the Black Hills among the upper tributaries of the stream that bears their name. Owing to some internal dissensions, a small number of the tribe seceded prior to 1820 and joined the Arapahoes. Later the rest of the tribe followed suit, until, by 1840, all seem to have gone to the country of their kindred.

The Cheyennes are said to have formerly dwelt in permanent villages, but their lot of misfortune had driven them to a wandering life, like that of their new neighbors. In spite of their disastrous experiences, they were a virile race, superb horsemen, tenacious of their ancient rights, and able to acquit themselves with credit when occasion required. They were much at war with the surrounding tribes, and the name of the Cheyennes everywhere inspired, if not terror, at least respect. With the whites they were generally, though not always, on friendly terms.

The traders found these Indians profitable fur gatherers, but the principal traffic with them was in horses. These they obtained in their frequent excursions to the southern plains, and made a regular business of selling them to the whites and to other Indians. It was in their village that the Astorians completed their outfit of horses in 1811. For the trade of these Indians the American Fur Company regularly maintained one or more trading posts in their country.

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[5] The Sauteurs of Spirit Lake frequented the Missouri river valley a great deal in the latter years of the trade. They were exceedingly troublesome in 1843.

THE PAWNEES *(Caddoan).*

The Pawnees, during the period of the fur trade, lived within the present limits of the state of Nebraska, and during the greater part of the time upon the Loup Fork of the Platte. They consisted of four distinct villages, the Grand Pawnees, the Republican Pawnees, the Tapage or Noisy Pawnees, and the Skidi or Pawnee Loups, nearly always called in early literature the Panimahas. In the later years of the eighteenth century, the Republican Pawnees moved south to the northern branch of the Kansas, which has since been known by their name. They rejoined the other villages on the Loup Fork probably about 1815.

The Pawnee Loups seem to have been later arrivals in the trans-Missouri country than were the other tribes. They claimed to be a distinct people, but their language proves an affinity. It was with this branch of the Pawnees that the Aricaras were associated, and the two formerly dwelt east of the Mississippi. After their migration across the Missouri, the Loups were conquered by the other Pawnee tribes, while the Aricaras went farther north. The Loups joined their conquerors and remained thereafter associated with them.

The Tapage Pawnees were the least important of the four bands, and are not mentioned at all by several of the early explorers. Thus Pike, in 1806, mentions only the three larger bands, and likewise Long, who passed through their villages fourteen years later. At that time the Pawnees were living 60 miles above the mouth of the Loup. The Grand Pawnees were farthest down stream, and numbered about 3,500 people. Three miles above them were the Republican Pawnees, with a population of about 1,000. The

Pawnee Loups lived four miles farther up, and numbered about 2,000 souls.

The Pawnees belonged to the permanent village tribes, and were, consequently, agriculturalists as well as hunters. Their lodges were very large, some 60 feet in diameter, circular in form, with conical roofs of flat slope. To judge from pictures of them they were not unlike, in general appearance, when seen from a distance, the thickly-clustered oil tanks in a modern petroleum district.

The agricultural productions of the Pawnees were the maize, pumpkins, and squashes. The maize they raised quite extensively, but left it largely to take care of itself. When the spring planting was done, they set out on hunting or foraging expeditions, and did not return until near the time for harvest. In the winter they cached the harvested corn and went off again to hunt for meat and robes.

The Pawnees were physically a well-formed and vigorous people, tall, slender and muscular, exhibiting the peculiar physiognomy of the Indian race. Their great athletic accomplishment was horsemanship, in which they ranked with the Crows on the north and the Comanches on the south. For a tribe who resided in permanent villages, they led a remarkably predatory life, and rivaled in this respect their tent-dwelling neighbors. Their excursions were generally south and southwest, and they were scarcely ever encountered in the country to the north and west.

These Indians were at one time and another at war with nearly all the surrounding tribes, and do not seem to have had any steadfast allies. A late high authority upon their history states that they were uniformly friendly to the whites. But this was not the case during the period of the fur trade, at which time they rivaled the Comanches as terrors of the southern plains. Gregg says of them that they were "among the most formidable enemies of the Santa Fe traders," and the name Pawnee was held in the same degree of dread by the traders of the south as were the Blackfeet by the traders of the north. Whatever may have been their disposition in later times, they harbored no feeling of love for the whites at this early day. They held a relation to the Spanish government for several years analogous to that held by the Sioux to the British. The Spanish regarded them somewhat in the nature of allies, or at least as very friendly disposed toward them, and this fact of itself made them hostile to Americans. Lieutenant Pike noted this hostility when he visited the Pawnees in 1806, and it did not die out for many years after.[6]

The trade of the Pawnees was principally in robes, the gathering of which was a great business with them. The traders never built a post in their country, but conducted the business from their establishment near the Council Bluffs. Men were sent with outfits of merchandise to reside with the Indians while at their villages and to follow them on their expeditions. The produce of the trade was shipped down the Loup Fork and the Platte in bull boats, where it was incorporated in the larger cargoes coming down the Missouri.

THE PONCAS *(Siouan)*.

Four of the lower Missouri tribes, viz.: the Poncas, the Omahas, the Kansas, and the Osages, were once a single tribe dwelling in the Ohio valley near the Wabash river. With them was also another band called the Kwapa. When the tribe migrated westward, the Kwapa separated from the others at the Mississippi, and the main body began the ascent to the Missouri valley. The Osages separated from the larger group at the Osage river, settling in the valley of that stream, and the Kansas followed suit when they reached the valley of the river which bears their name. The Omahas and the Poncas gradually made their way farther up the river, and finally themselves parted company, the Omahas settling on the west bank of the Missouri at a considerable distance above the Platte, while the Poncas located near the mouth of the Niobrara.

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[6] As late as 1811 an officer belonging to the government trading factory at Fort Osage made a visit to the Kansas and Pawnees. He left Fort Osage May 11; reached the Kansas May 19, at a point about one hundred miles above the mouth of the Kansas river; found several American flags in the village; left village May 22 and reached Republican Pawnees one hundred and twenty miles farther; continued journey and crossed Platte about 28th; came to Pawnee villages on Loup Fork, one hundred miles above mouth; found Pawnees in close relation with Santa Fe; one Spanish flag found; also a letter from governor of Santa Fe thanking Pawnees for their loyalty. It is evident that at this date the Republican Pawnees were still on the Republican Fork of Kansas river.

Such, in simple outline, are supposed to have been the movements which carried a great tribe from the forest country east of the Mississippi to the treeless plains of the central West. The movement doubtless consumed a long period of time, and was marked by wars and other important events, which are now lost to history. The four sub-tribes had long been settled in their new homes when the white man found them, and remained there during the whole period of the fur trade.

In physical characteristics and in tribal customs the Poncas resembled their kindred, the Omahas. They had been oppressed through many years by the Sioux, and reduced by the smallpox, until, when the traders came, they numbered but little more than 200 souls. They were always on friendly terms with the whites, and a regular trading post was maintained in their territory.

THE OMAHAS *(Siouan)*.

Although this seems to be the correct form of the name, it was more usually spelled Maha in the first half of the 19th century. The Omahas were once a powerful tribe, but the oppressions of the Sioux and a terrible epidemic of the smallpox in the later years of the 18th century had reduced their numbers to about 400. Their habitat was on the west bank of the Missouri, about one hundred miles above the modern city which bears their name. Naturally a warlike tribe, their spirit had been broken by their great misfortunes, and they seem not to have gone to war to any great extent after the traders settled among them. On account of this quiet life they do not figure prominently in annals of Western adventure. They did, however, produce some of the most noted chiefs of any of the Indian tribes, and among them the great chief Black Bird, who died of the smallpox a few years before the arrival of Lewis and Clark.

The Omahas were a popular tribe with the traders, and seem to have been industrious fur gatherers. They dwelt in permanent villages, but were absent on their hunting excursions several months of the year. All of the leading fur companies maintained trading posts near the old Council Bluffs for the convenience of these Indians and other tribes in the vicinity.

THE KANSAS *(Siouan).*

This tribe dwelt in the valley of the river which bears their name, and their village was located a few miles above its mouth. They had a population of about 1,500. They lived in mud huts not unlike those of the Mandans, and followed a life similar to that of the tribes around them. They were generally at peace with their neighbors, who were indeed of their own stock. With the whites they were also usually at peace, although they committed many outrages upon small parties. They cultivated maize and followed the chase, but became indolent and lazy as their dependence upon the government increased. A permanent trading post was maintained among them.

THE OSAGES *(Siouan).*

This great nation was the first in the Missouri valley to have a regular trade with the whites. Many years before the Louisiana Purchase, trading posts had been built in their country. At the time of the general migration westward from east of the Mississippi, the Osages settled in the country along the Osage river and between that stream and the Missouri. Subsequently they divided into smaller bands.

The first separation, which Pike places early in the 18th century, was into two tribes, the Great and Little Osages, but later the Little Osages, finding themselves too weak for self-protection, located near the large village. A third division, which Pike calls the Arkansas Schism, was brought about by the white traders. For many years prior to 1800 Mr. Pierre Chouteau had monopolized the trade of these Indians, but at about the above date, or perhaps a little earlier, Mr. Manuel Lisa obtained from the Spanish authorities an exclusive grant of their trade. Incensed at this action, Mr. Chouteau, who had the monopoly of trade on the Arkansas, intrigued with the Indians and succeeded in drawing so large a part of the tribe to his post that he practically nullified the value of Lisa's monopoly, and led to a permanent division of the tribe.

The Osages, like the Omahas, Otoes, and Kansas, lived in permanent villages, but their huts were rectangular in plan, in which respect their architecture differed materially from that of the other tribes. The huts were supported by vertical posts, the center row under the ridgepole being about twenty feet high and the outside rows about five feet. Poles and rafters gave support to the roofing of brush, bark and dirt. These huts were sometimes sixty feet long. Fires were kindled on the ground under the ridgepole, and the smoke escaped through openings in the roof.

In language, customs, and dress the Osages were like their kindred tribes. They were of especial importance to the trader by reason of their large property in horses, which they obtained through annual excursions to the southwestern plains. They were good judges of these animals, and the traders relied on them largely in organizing their expeditions, for these were made up on the very borders of the Osage country.

The Osages were on the whole friendly to the whites, but their marauding parties did great mischief to small bands of trappers or hunters. There was much complaint of them by the Santa Fe traders, and many unprovoked outrages were committed by them. Permanent posts were always maintained in their country.

THE IOWAS *(Siouan).*

There were three other tribes who dwelt in the lower Missouri valley, and were familiarly known to the traders. They were the Iowas, the Otoes, and the Missouris, who all sprang from a common stock which was closely related to the Winnebago division of the Siouan family. What their course of migration was is unknown, but they had crossed the Mississippi before they first fell under the observation of white men.

The pristine home of these Indians was practically what is now the state which bears their name. They were found within the historic period in almost every part of that region. Once a powerful tribe, they, like their neighbors, had been ruined by the smallpox and the Sioux, and they were a small tribe of only 800 people when the American traders opened relations with them. They traded principally at Robidoux post at Black Snake Hills, where St. Joseph, Mo., now stands, and also to some extent at the Council Bluffs.

THE OTOES *(Siouan).*

From at least as far back as the middle of the 18th century the Otoes dwelt on the banks of the Platte about 40 miles above its mouth. They lived in dirt villages like the other tribes of the lower Missouri. They present no characteristics notably different from the surrounding tribes, and their history during the fur trade period was uneventful. Their trade all went to the establishments at Council Bluffs.

Iatan was the name of a noted chief of the Otoes who held sway over the tribe from about 1825 to 1840, when the fur trade was in its most flourishing condition. He earned his name from a hard-fought battle between his tribe and the Comanches or Iatans, in which the latter were utterly routed. His native name was a long word which signified

"Prairie Wolf." Iatan was a popular chief, even with other tribes, and was frequently called into the councils of the Pawnees.

THE MISSOURIS *(Siouan)*.

This tribe, though of little importance to the fur trade, is an interesting one historically. From it is derived the name of the great river on whose shores they dwelt,[7] and where they were actors in events of deep significance in the history of the trans-Mississippi territory. Within the knowledge of white men the tribe resided near the mouth of the river, but they were driven off by the Illinois and were found early in the 18th century farther up the Missouri on its left or north bank not far below the mouth of Grand river. It was here that the tragedy occurred in 1720 in which a Spanish expedition against the Missouris was destroyed by these Indians. Near by, on an island, the French erected their first post in the Missouri valley.[8] Sometime after this event they suffered a misfortune from which they never recovered, and which marks the termination of their separate tribal existence. They were attacked by the Sac and Fox Indians, and were almost annihilated. The remnants of the tribe dispersed among the Osages, the Kansas, and the Otoes, where they were found by the traders.

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[7] See Chapter III., this Part.

[8] See Appendix F.

CHAPTER X.

NATIVE TRIBES

OF THE SOUTHWEST AND THE TRA-MONTANE COUNTRY.

The Paducas — Trading custom of the Paducas — The Arapahoes — Tribal history — Characteristics — Relation with the traders — The Kiowas — The Comanches — Habitat — Characteristics — An equestrian tribe — New Mexican tribes — The Pueblos — Meaning of term as applied to the Indians — Characteristics — The Navajos — The Apaches — The Shoshones or Snakes — Their country — Characteristics — The Bannocks — The Pai-utes — The Utahs — Their country — Characteristics — The Sheep-eaters — The Mokis and Mojaves — The Nez Perces — Other names for the tribe — Confusion as to the name Flathead — Country of the Nez Perces — Characteristics of the tribe — Relation to the missionaries and the traders — The Flatheads — Other tribes of the Columbia Basin — Peculiarities of the coast tribes.

THE PADUCAS.

IN the earlier notices of the country, near the base of the Rocky mountains at the headwaters of the Platte and Arkansas rivers, before exploration had penetrated so far, the name Paduca was applied to the native inhabitants that were supposed to be located in that section. The first extensive report upon these Indians appears to have been by Bourgemont, in 1724, but the precise application of the name has never been determined. As the country came to be known, the tribes who dwelt there were found to have other designations, and the name Paduca consequently fell into disuse. In one form or another the name is found in the vocabularies of the several Siouan tribes, and by them was applied to the Comanches. This, however, was not the understanding of the earlier authorities, who knew of the existence of the Comanches, or Iatans, as they were called, but who still referred to the Paducas as a distinct people. Even Pike, who was one of the first to identify the Paducas with the

Comanches, directly contradicts himself in his tabulated statement of the Indian tribes of the West, in which he mentions the Paducas and the Comanches as separate tribes. Another early writer refers to the Iatans and the Paducas as being at war with each other. Furthermore, the habitat of the Comanches in historic times has been south of the Arkansas, while that of the Paducas was always located on the headwaters of the Platte, and one of the principal branches of that stream bears the name Paduca on some of the older maps. It is therefore clear that, whatever may have been the Sioux name of the Comanches, the name Paduca was not considered by the early writers as belonging to that tribe. On the whole the explanation given by Dr. James, in his narrative of Long's Expedition of 1820, and which is followed by Gallatin in his Synopsis of the Indian Tribes of North America (1836), appears the most reasonable of any — that the name Paduca was formerly applied collectively to the tribes living at the headwaters of the Platte, who have since become known under the separate names of Arapahoes, Kiowas, etc.

The Paducas, or more particularly the Arapahoes, who were the principal tribe of the Paduca country, formerly held a sort of fair on a tributary of the south Platte near the site of the modern city of Denver, Colo. The stream was at one time known, from this circumstance, as Grand Encampment creek. At this rendezvous the Arapahoes acted as middlemen in the exchange of articles obtained from Spaniards on the south with those obtained through their kindred, the Grosventres and the Cheyennes, from the British on the north. It is conjectured by some authorities that the name Arapaho signifies "he who buys or trades," and has reference to this early custom. However this may be, the fact itself is an interesting one in connection with our present studies, disclosing as it does the advancing shadow of the trader long before his actual appearance upon the scene.

THE ARAPAHOES *(Algonquian)*.

In the western migration of the Arapahoes and Grosventres, as already noted, the Arapahoes went to the headwaters of the Missouri, and then, turning south, made their way to the eastern base of the Rocky mountains, in what is now the state of Colorado. These Indians are described in the modern scientific classification as the Southern Arapahoes, the Northern Arapahoes having remained on the headwaters of the Yellowstone. Be this as it may, no such distinction was known to the traders and trappers, and no Indians of this name are ever spoken of as dwelling in the northern mountains. When the Arapahoes are mentioned the tribe in the valley of the South Platte is always meant.

In physical characteristics the Arapahoes resembled their neighbors very closely. In stature they were rather inferior to the Missouri Indians, but much like them in physiognomy and dress. A distinctive feature of their tribal custom was the tattooed breast. They gave great attention to the hair, which they permitted to grow to great length, sometimes even increasing its length by the use of false hair. Their clothing was like that of the tribes farther north, but contained in addition blankets and other articles obtained from the Spaniards.

The Arapahoes were exclusively a wandering tribe, living in skin tents, and during the period of the fur trade numbered about 2,500 souls. With most of their neighbors, except the Utahs and Pawnees, they were at peace. In the earlier years of the trade they were very hostile to Americans, but in 1832 Captain Gant, of the firm of Gant and Blackwell, established a trading post in their country on the Arkansas river and succeeded in gaining their confidence. After that time they were uniformly friendly to the whites. While not aggressively warlike, they were good fighters, and were held in high respect by their enemies. They were a brave, candid and honest people, and were much less given to beggary and thieving than were most other Indians.

They have proven among the most peaceable of the tribes, and the most willing to be led in the new pathway of civilization.

The Arapahoes were an important tribe to the traders, and their country was always one of active operations. Not only were they good fur producers, but they were accomplished traders themselves, from their long experience already alluded to, in this sort of business. Many posts were established in their country upon the headwaters of both the Arkansas and the South Platte.

THE KIOWAS.

So far as known this tribe is of an independent linguistic stock and its history is very obscure. Modern research claims to have traced its course of migration from the headwaters of the Missouri southeastward through the country of the Crows, who became their allies, and that of the Sioux and Cheyennes, who became their enemies. What their first alliances were when they reached the Paduca country is uncertain. They are known to have been in close association with the Arapahoes, and as late as 1820 Long found them so associated as if in permanent union. But it is equally certain that their later and stronger alliance was with the Comanches. Their habitat, therefore, was that of their associates, and comprised the entire Arapaho and Comanche country. If it were possible to designate any one situation as more resorted to by them than another, it was the valley of the Arkansas on the south side near the Purgatory river.

The Kiowas were not a tribe well known to the traders, and almost no mention is made of them in the annals of the times. A late authority says that they were "the most predatory and blood-thirsty" of the prairie tribes, and that "they have probably killed more white men in proportion to their number than any of the others." This statement is not at all borne out by the records of the fur trade, in which encounters with the Kiowas are rarely mentioned.

It is possible that these Indians have been given credit by later historians for many of the outrages committed by the Comanches. The long and close association of the two tribes would make an error of this kind possible. On the other hand, the same cause may have led the traders to suppose that they were being annoyed by Comanches when in reality it was the Kiowas. In either case it is a fact that the literature of the fur trade has very little to say of the Kiowas but a great deal of the Comanches.

There was an early trading post of the American Fur Company named Fort Kiowa. Strange to say, it was located on the Missouri river near the mouth of White river, far away from the actual home of the Kiowas.

THE COMANCHES *(Shoshonean)*.

These Indians were the only tribe of the great Shoshonean family who dwelt exclusively upon the plains. They were formerly confederated with the eastern Shoshones, who still reside in Wyoming, but from some cause, supposed to be the pressure of their enemies, the Sioux, the two bands separated, the Comanches moving southeast into the plains, while their associates turned back into the mountains. Their habitat was south of the Arkansas, in portions of what are now Oklahoma, Texas, and New Mexico.

The Comanches were, in the fullest sense, a wandering people, and it is doubtful if any other American tribe led an existence of such continuous movement from place to place. They, of course, had no permanent villages, but lived in skin tents, and their entire domestic economy was ordered with reference to the supreme condition of mobility. It is even impossible to fix upon any locality in their country which they frequented more than another. They moved north and south, according to the season, but for the rest they went wherever fortune promised to be most propitious.

The worldly wealth of the Comanches and the prime object of their solicitude was the horse. They were the most expert horsemen among the American Indians, not even excepting the Pawnees and the Crows. They were trained to ride from infancy, and their remarkable skill in handling their animals has been the wonder of all who have witnessed it. They marked their animals with a slit in the ear, and they could not be induced for love nor money to part with their favorite steeds.

In personal characteristics they were not particularly different from the Arapahoes. They wore less clothing than the northern tribes, for their climate did not require so much, but they were quite as proud and fastidious about what they did wear. It is noted of these Indians, as a remarkable exception, that they did not care for liquor.

The Comanches were a very dangerous tribe, and were enemies to nearly all their neighbors, whether white or red. They were the terror of the southern plains, and their name carried a shudder wherever it was heard, from the Brazos to the Rio Grande del Norte. They were of very little use to the traders, for they were not good fur gatherers, but they always had to be reckoned with on account of their abandoned and lawless character. Some of the most lamentable tragedies of the Santa Fe Trail are chargeable to them.

THE PUEBLOS.

The Indians who dwelt in the northern provinces of Mexico, which are now comprised within the territories of New Mexico and Arizona, played little part in the history of the fur trade, and only a very brief reference will be made to them here. They were too far south for a profitable fur-bearing country, and it was only occasionally that the regular fur traders came in contact with them. The Santa Fe trader had limited dealings with them, and they were, of course, encountered along the trails between the Rio Grande valley and California.

The Pueblos dwelt mainly in the valley of the Rio Grande del Norte. The name Pueblo has no ethnic significance in this connection; that is, it is not in any sense a tribal or family name, but refers to those tribes of Indians in New Mexico who built and occupied the characteristic villages called pueblos. They comprised at least three distinct linguistic stocks, of which the Keresan and Tañoan were the more important. They were distinguished from surrounding tribes by their peaceful and unwarlike nature, the fixity of their abode, their quiet pursuit of peaceful vocations, and their marked advance in the cruder arts of civilized life.

The Pueblos of New Mexico were an industrious, prosperous and numerous people when the Spaniards entered their country, but the effects of the political and religious system which was imposed upon them were sufficient, in the course of two centuries, to reduce them to scarcely a tenth of their former number. In the course of long intercourse with their conquerors, they adopted many of the Spanish customs, while the latter borrowed extensively from the Pueblos, so that, with continuous intermarriage, the result was an amalgam in which the predominant element was a matter of doubt.

These Indians exercised no particular influence upon the American fur trade; but owing to the similarity of their food, dress, and other articles of daily life to those of the Mexicans, the Santa Fe trade did undoubtedly receive material assistance from them. They were always on friendly terms with the Americans.

THE NAVAJOS *(Athabascan)*.

These Indians are said to have numbered, during the era of the fur trade, about ten thousand people, and their country lay west of Santa Fe between the Little Colorado and San Juan rivers as far as to the Colorado of the West. They dwelt in rude huts, somewhat resembling those of northern permanent villages. The characteristic production of their tribal life, which has given them a wide notoriety, was the Navajo blanket, an article of such close texture that it is nearly as impervious to water as a rubber blanket. The value of a genuine Navajo blanket, like a genuine Oriental rug, is very great. Many of these blankets found their way East through the medium of the Santa Fe traders.

The Navajos were never subjugated by the Spaniards, with whom they remained in a state of almost perpetual hostility. Neither did the Catholic missionaries make any permanent impression upon them. A peace arrangement was generally made between them and the New Mexican government every spring, on terms dictated by the Indians. It was a wily move on their part to secure sufficient tranquillity to plant their crops and conduct their trade. At the close of the season their predatory habits were generally resumed. They seem to have directed their hostile efforts only against the Mexicans. There is no evidence that they were unfriendly to the Americans, and the fur traders operated freely in their country.

THE APACHES *(Athabascan)*.

The various tribes that fall under the above designation occupied the vast territory now comprised in the southern half of the territories of New Mexico and Arizona. The Apaches were a wandering tribe without fixed habitations, using skin tents when they used any. Taken all in all, they have probably been the most troublesome Indians within the territorial limits of the United States. They are the only Indians who, in their habitual state, lived neither upon agriculture nor upon the chase, but by robbery from surrounding peoples. In their whole career of more than two centuries, the Spanish and Republican governments never subjugated nor converted them, and, in fact, seem to have existed only by their sufferance. They were too shrewd to wish to drive the Spaniards out entirely, for it was from them that their chief tribute came. They were wont to conclude a temporary peace with one province while waging war on another, and the booty obtained from the latter they would trade in the former. In this way they laid a tribute upon the provinces, which constituted in large part their subsistence. While the raids of the Apaches did not reach the extent of actual extermination of the white population, and probably were not intended to, they had, in later years, caused the abandonment of most of the ranches which were located away from the villages, and the country wore a depopulated appearance in consequence. It is said that the Mexican population was gradually diminishing from this cause in the years immediately preceding the American conquest.

The Apaches for many years were rather friendly than otherwise to the American traders, and the Mexican authorities concluded from this that there was some mutual understanding or alliance; but there never was. In 1838 the treacherous conduct of a party of Americans in killing a large number of Apaches whom they had accosted as friends put an end to the amicable relations between the two peoples. Among the problems which the conquest of New Mexico brought to the United States, the most difficult one was the Apache problem, and this it took nearly two score years to settle.

THE SHOSHONES OR SNAKES *(Shoshonean)*.

These Indians were the type of the Shoshonean family, and the name Snake[1] was of such general use as almost to obscure the family name. The tribe dwelt in the upper portions of the valleys of Green and Snake rivers and the northern portion of Bear river valley. What their population was at the time when the traders first came to their country is very uncertain, for it is not known just what bands of Indians different writers intended to include in their estimates.

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[1] Alexander Ross is authority for the statement that this name arose from the characteristic of these Indians in quickly concealing themselves when once discovered. They seemed to glide away in the grass, sage brush and rocks and disappear with all the subtlety of a serpent.

Father De Smet gives the following: "They are called Snakes because in their poverty they are reduced like reptiles to the condition of digging in the ground and seeking nourishment from roots."

In physical characteristics the Shoshones were inferior to the tribes heretofore described. The precarious livelihood which they were able to extract from the poverty of the country could not sustain a stalwart physique, and they did not present that appearance of hardy manhood that was generally observed among the Indians farther east. They were, however, excellent horsemen and good warriors, and their martial prowess, if not to be compared with that of the Blackfeet and the Crows, was held in wholesome respect by the neighboring tribes.

They were exclusively a wandering tribe. The necessities of subsistence, which was mainly derived from the buffalo and the salmon, compelled long excursions, either to the lower rivers, where fish were taken, or to the plains of the Missouri, in quest of buffalo. From the nature of their means of subsistence, these Indians partook of the traits and customs of both the fishing and hunting Indians.

While the Shoshones were a brave, active and shrewd people, they were, on the other hand, suspicious, treacherous and jealous. They were not openly hostile, but were such inveterate beggars and thieves that they were considered an intolerable nuisance. With the whites they were always at peace after their first few years' acquaintance. They were good fur gatherers, though not so useful in this respect as the Missouri Indians. There were only two trading posts in their territory, Fort Boisé, in the western portion, and Fort Hall, in the central. The establishment of both these posts, however, arose from peculiar conditions of competition among the traders, and not from any real necessity to accommodate the trade of the Indians. The usual method of exploiting the resources of the Snake country was by means of white trapping parties, who also traded such furs as the Indians might have to sell.

The Shoshones were on friendly terms with the Nez Perces and Flatheads at the north, but were generally at war with the Crows, Blackfeet, and Utahs on the eastern border of their country. Necessity compelled them to go annually into the country of the Blackfeet to hunt buffalo, but on such occasions they went in sufficient force to bid defiance to their enemies. Frequently these expeditions were made in alliance with the Nez Perces or Flatheads.

THE BANNOCKS *(Shoshonean)*.

The Bannocks were the most warlike of the Shoshone tribes except the Comanches, and in this respect compared favorably with the plains tribes across the mountains. But while they were better specimens of Indian manhood than were certain other tribes of this stock, they were of a more troublesome character than the Snakes, and had the reputation of being a sort of lawless banditti, frequently infesting the routes of travel and causing trouble to the emigrants. The trappers had many hostile encounters with them, and kept a careful watch upon them whenever in their vicinity. One of the earliest notices of them is the pursuit of one of their bands in 1824 by a party under James Bridger, then a young man, for the purpose of retaking some horses which they had stolen. The country of the Bannocks was the territory between the Great Salt Lake and Snake river, and it lay athwart both the Oregon and California Trails.

PAI-UTES OR ROOT DIGGERS *(Shoshonean)*.

These were the most degraded and pitiable of all the Indian tribes of the West. They dwelt in that desolate waste to the west and south of Great Salt Lake, where nature has dealt with a more niggardly hand than in any other part of the country. The barrenness of the country was reflected in the character of the inhabitants. They were inferior in stature, almost devoid of clothing, and nearly always in a condition bordering on starvation. Their degradation is attested by the fact that they subsisted to a considerable extent upon ants, other insects and vermin, and also upon roots, from which fact they were called by the opprobrious epithet of Root Diggers, or simply Diggers. In the winter they sought shelter among the sage brush and lived upon grass seed, or anything that the scanty gratuity of nature afforded them. They had no horses, and were armed only with the bow and arrow. They were "destitute of all the necessaries that make life even desirable." As a rule they were friendly to the whites, more perhaps through fear than otherwise. They were harmless through incapacity to do harm. They were, however, disposed to theft, and at times made their annoyances from this cause almost insufferable. This was the excuse offered for the frightful massacre of these Indians by the Walker party in 1833, of which an account is given elsewhere.

The name Root Diggers has by some writers been restricted to the tribe of Pai-Utes; but it was used with reference to several tribes. It was an epithet derived from a manner of life, and the trappers applied it to any of those degraded peoples who dug roots for a subsistence, or depended upon other equally precarious means.

THE UTAHS *(Shoshonean)*.

The Utahs dwelt north of the Navajo country in the valleys of Green and Grand rivers. The crest of the Wasatch range on the west and the Uintah mountains on the north denoted the limits of their country in those directions. They are said to have numbered about 2,500 souls.

They were a predatory tribe, never having lived in fixed villages. In physical development they ranked with the Bannocks and Shoshones, and were rated as the best horsemen living west of the mountains. They bore an excellent character among the hunters, as being less addicted to thieving, dishonesty, gambling, and other native vices, than were most of the other tribes. They were a thrifty race as Indians go, well clothed, and were industrious in gathering furs. While not belligerent in character, they were a brave and warlike people when occasion made war necessary. Their excursions for buffalo brought them into frequent contact with the Cheyennes, Arapahoes, and other eastern tribes, with whom they had many deadly encounters.

Their country was rich in beaver, and was well known to the traders, who built no fewer than four trading posts within it. These were Robidoux's two posts on the Uintah and Gunnison rivers, Fort Davy Crockett in Brown's Hole, and Fraeb's post on the Yampah. Trails led from their country to Santa Fe, and they were well known to the New Mexicans, whose language, it is said, they understood.

THE TUKUARIKA OR SHEEPEATERS *(Shoshonean)*.

This small and insignificant tribe was distinguished as being the only tribe of Indians ever known to have regularly dwelt within any part of that singular region which is now the Yellowstone National Park.

THE MOKIS AND THE MOJAVES.

In the far south dwelt two tribes, the Mokis *(Shoshonean)*, in the valley of the Colorado Chiquito, and the Mojaves *(Yuman)* on the lower course of the Colorado of the West, who are occasionally mentioned in fur trade literature. It was the latter tribe who massacred the party of Jedediah S. Smith in August, 1827, while crossing the river on a raft en route to California.

THE NEZ PERCES *(Shahaptian)*.

These Indians were frequently called by the name Chopunnish, and by their own name, Sahaptin. The name Flathead was also applied to them in ignorance of actual tribal distinctions on the coast, and much confusion has arisen thereby. For example, the famous Flathead deputation to St. Louis in 1832 for the purpose of seeking religious instruction was undoubtedly composed of Nez Perce Indians. There is, in fact, a great deal in the nomenclature of the Western tribes which is still without adequate explanation, for the customs which would seem to have given rise to certain names had almost entirely passed away even in the days of the fur trade. Thus one of the most intelligent and observing of the traders,[2] who spent five years in the

[2] W. A. Ferris, *Life in the Rocky Mountains.*

Far West from 1830 to 1835, and passed one winter among the Flatheads, refers to these incongruities as follows: "Several tribes of mountain Indians, it will be observed, have names that would be supposed descriptive of some national peculiarity. Among these are the Blackfeet, Flatheads, Pend d' Oreilles, Nez Perces, Grosventres, etc. And yet it is a fact that of these the first have the whitest feet; there is not among the next a deformed head; . . . there is not among the Nez Perces an individual having any part of the nose perforated; nor do any of the Pend d' Oreilles wear ornaments in their ears; and finally, the Grosventres are as slim as any other Indians, and corpulency among them as rare." Whether the Nez Perces ever did wear nose pendants does not seem to be a matter of definite record, and it may well be doubted. It was a name given by the French, and probably with no more reason than were the names *Grosventre* or *Pied-noir*. But it is a fact that the Nez Perces did follow to some extent the custom of flattening their heads, although it died out after the advent of the white man. Mrs. Whitman (1836) records her impressions upon finding children undergoing this process of deformation, and there is a positive record by an eye-witness that the deputation of Indians who went to St. Louis in 1832 had flattened foreheads.[a] It was, in fact, the Nez Perces rather than the tribe which bears the name Flatheads, that practiced this deformation, and it was one of the few mountain tribes that did so, although the custom prevailed extensively among the natives of the coast. The early nomenclature, which still obtains, was therefore given in ignorance of actual conditions, and is largely misleading. That this same confusion of names existed before the advent of the white man is evident from the following observation by Lewis and Clark: "The custom, indeed, of flattening the head by artificial pressure during infancy prevails among all the nations that we have seen west of the Rocky Mountains. To the east of that barrier the fashion is so perfectly unknown that there the western Indians, with the exception of the Snake nations, are designated by the common name Flatheads." It is singular that this name should finally have settled on the tribe where the practice prevailed the least.[4]

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[a] See Appendix D.

The country of the Nez Perces was the lower watershed of the Snake river, including particularly the valleys of the Clearwater and Salmon rivers on the east, and the Grande Ronde river on the west. The tribe was the most important of the Shahaptian stock, and played a notable part in the fur trade and missionary history of the Columbia valley. Physically they were a well-developed race, and compared favorably with the tribes east of the mountains. They were an equestrian tribe, and were well supplied with horses. Their subsistence was both the salmon and buffalo. They made annual excursions to the Judith Basin to lay in their supply of meat, and the trail habitually followed in these journeys is still well known to the white inhabitants of that country.

All later accounts agree that the Nez Perces were a highly honorable tribe in their dealings with the whites and with other Indians, although a different impression was made upon Lewis and Clark and upon the Astorians. They were a brave and powerful tribe, and their relations with all their neighbors, except the Blackfeet, were friendly. They were always staunch friends of the whites, and it can never cease to be a matter of keen regret that their tribal history could not have been brought to an end without the mournful tragedy of the war of 1877.

One of the most noteworthy characteristics of this tribe and of the Flatheads also was their deeply religious nature. They eagerly sought instruction in the Christian religion, adopted its rites and ceremonies with zeal, and became the most fruitful field for missionary effort of any of the Western tribes.

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[4] A striking illustration of this confusion of names is found in a little incident which occurred in St. Louis when one of a deputation of Indians from these distant tribes died there and was buried in the Catholic burying ground. The record of burial refers to this Indian as a "Nez Perce of the Choponeek tribe, a nation called by the name Flathead."

Although the Nez Perce country belonged commercially to the Hudson Bay Company, the American traders operated in it extensively. It was rich in beaver fur, and this, with the abundance of horses to be had from these Indians, made them an important tribe to the trade. Fort Nez Perce or Walla Walla, a Hudson Bay Company post, was located on Snake river a little above the mouth of the Walla Walla.

THE FLATHEADS OR SALISH *(Salishan)*.

The Flatheads here referred to dwelt in the extreme western part of Montana between the Continental Divide on the east and the Bitter Root range on the west. Their country was drained by Clark's Fork of the Columbia, and its center was near the large and beautiful Flathead Lake.

The characteristics of the Nez Perce Indians were accentuated in the Flatheads. They were extremely receptive of religious influences; always friendly to the whites, and to most of the neighboring tribes; brave and vigorous in battle, and intensely warlike when war was unavoidable. Nearly all their hostile encounters were with the Blackfeet, but these were many. If we may accept the evidence of Father De Smet, whose affection for these Indians made him rather partial towards them, they were more than a match in battle with their enemies.

The Flathead country was very rich in beaver, and was a great resort for trappers. The Hudson Bay Company maintained a regular post there.

OTHER TRIBES OF THE COLUMBIA VALLEY.

The valley of the Columbia lying outside the pale of the American fur trade, except in the country of the Shoshones, Nez Perces, and Flatheads, no detailed notice will be given of the tribes dwelling there. The number of these tribes was very great. In the upper Columbia valley were the

Pend d'Oreilles, Cœur d'Alênes, Spokanes, Cayuses, Walla Wallas, and Umatillas, who resembled in characteristics and customs the Flatheads and the Nez Perces. The Indians along the lower Columbia were a very different sort of people, owing to their different environment and means of subsistence. The Indians of the plains and the central mountain regions were horsemen, accustomed to the most hardy exercises in the pursuit of game and war and they were generally muscular and well formed. The coast Indians, on the other hand, subsisted principally upon fish, passed their time largely on or around the water, paddling in their canoes, or engaged in the unathletic work of still fishing. They were less strong physically than the plains Indians, of inferior build, and in no sense comparable to them as specimens of physical manhood. They became, indeed, very expert in the arts that pertain to canoe navigation and fishing, but they were physically ill-formed, with "broad, flat feet, thick ankles and crooked legs."

The tribes near the mouth of the Columbia were generally friendly to the whites, and were of great importance in the early fur trade of this section. They were much addicted to small thieving and were inveterate gamblers, though not so fond of liquor as most other tribes. They were excellent traffickers, having quickly learned the white man's value of their wares and were as shrewd as any one in driving a bargain.

Near the Cascades and Dalles of the Columbia dwelt some of the most troublesome tribes to be found in the entire West. They were sagacious and shrewd, but entirely without conscience, and were the boldest and most successful thieves and robbers among the aboriginal tribes. This locality had long been a trading emporium between the Indians of the upper and lower Columbia, and the Indians there seem to have acted as middlemen in the traffic. During the career of the Pacific Fur Company on the Columbia these Indians were a constant peril to expeditions passing up and down the river.

HISTORY

OF

THE AMERICAN FUR TRADE

OF THE

FAR WEST

THE

American Fur Trade

OF THE

Far West

A History of the Pioneer Trading Posts and Early
Fur Companies of the Missouri Valley and
the Rocky Mountains and of
the Overland Commerce
with Santa Fe.

MAP AND ILLUSTRATIONS

BY

HIRAM MARTIN CHITTENDEN

Captain Corps of Engineers, U. S. A., Author of
"The Yellowstone."

THREE VOLUMES

VOLUME III.

NEW YORK
FRANCIS P. HARPER
1902

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APPENDICES.

A.

COPY OF LETTER FROM PIERRE MENARD TO PIERRE CHOUTEAU.

An account of the first attack by the Blackfeet upon the Missouri Fur Company at the Three Forks of the Missouri in the summer of 1810.

Below are given in the original and corrected French and in English translation copies of a letter found among the Chouteau papers. It is probably the only document in existence that was written upon the identical spot where the old fort of the St. Louis Missouri Fur Company stood at the Three Forks of the Missouri. It narrates an important event in the series of disasters which overtook the company in that quarter, and is a genuine messenger from that forlorn band under Henry who later, when driven from this position, crossed the Divide and built the first trading establishment upon Columbian waters. The original of this letter, in four pages, written upon a sheet of fine light blue paper, full letter size, and still in excellent preservation, is in the possession of Mr. Pierre Chouteau of St. Louis. The names in brackets marked * are as printed in the *Louisiana Gazette* of July 26, 1810, from an interview with Menard.

trois fourches du Missourie 21 Avrill 1810
Trois Fourches du Missouri, 21 Avril, 1810.

Monsieur }
Monsieur
Pierre Chouteau eqr }
Pierre Chouteau eqr.

Monsieur et beau-frère
Monsieur et beau-frère

Je matandais Pourvoir} vous Écrire Plus favorable que
Je m'attendais pouvoir vous écrire plus favorablement que

180879

Je ne suis Ameme de le faire a present Les prospect de vent
je ne suis à même de le faire à présent. Les prospects devant

nos yeux il lia dix Jours etait Beaucoup Plus flateurs quil le
nos yeux il y a dix jours étaient beaucoup plus flatteurs qu'ils ne

sont aujourdhuit un party de nos Chasseurs on Etez de fait Par
sont aujourd'hui. Une partie de nos chasseurs a été défaite par

les pied noirs le 12 du present il lia heus Deux homme De tuez
les Pieds-noirs le 12 du présent. Il y a eu deux hommes de tués,

tous leurs castors pilliez et Beaucoup de pieges De perdues et
tous leurs castors pillés, et beaucoup de pièges de perdus, et

lamoniton de plusieur de nos Chasseurs et 7 de nos Chevaaux
l'amonition de plusieurs de nos chasseurs, et 7 de nos chevaux.

Nous avont Etez aleure poursuite maist malheureusement nous
Nous avons été à leur poursuite, mais malheureusement nous

navont pas pux les rejoindre Nous avon ramasse 44 piege et
n'avons pas pu les rejoindre. Nous avons ramassé 44 pièges et

3 chevau que nous avont Ramene icy et nous Esperont trouvez En-
3 chevaux que nous avons ramenés ici, et nous esperons trouver en-

core quelque piege Set malheureuse afaire a toute afet
core quelques pièges. Cette malheureuse affaire a tout à fait

Decourages Nos Chasseurs Il ne veulle plus aller a la chasse
découragé nos chasseurs. Ils ne veulent plus aller à la chasse

icy il en partira se pendent de mains 30 qui son tous de gens
ici. Ils en partiront cependant demain 30, qui sont tous de gens

a gage les 14 Lous et 16 Fransais il vont allandroit ou les
à gage, les 14 loués et 16 Français. Ils vont à l'endroit où les

autres on Etes De fait Je ne leur donne que 3 pieges Chaque ne
autres ont été défaits. Je ne leur donne que 3 pièges chacun, ne

croient point prudent Dans risque daventage et surtous lorsque
croyant point prudent d'en risquer davantage, et surtout lorsqu'

il ne doive point Se Se pare et La moitier devent toujours
ils ne doivent point se séparer, et la moitié doivent toujours

Etres au campement. Le parti qui a etez de faite Consistait Au
être au campement. La partie qui a été défaite consistait en

onse personne et les trois quare Etait a les tendre Leurs
onse personnes, et les trois quarts étaient allés tendre leurs

piege Lorsque les Sauvages on fonce au campement Le deux per-
pièges lorsque les sauvages enfonçaient le campement. Les deux per-

son tues Son James Chique [Cheeks*] et un nomez haire [Ayres*]
sonnes tués sont James Chique [Cheeks] et un nommé Haire [Ayres],

Angage de Mes Crou [Crooks] et McLanell [McLellan] que Mess
engagés de Messrs Crou [Crooks] et McLanell [McLellan] que Messrs

Silvestre [Chouteau] & Auguste [Chouteau] avait équipé Pour chasse
Silvestre [Chouteau] & Auguste [Chouteau] avaient équipés pour chasser

de Moitiez il manque autres ses deux Le Jeune Hulle [Hull*] qui
de moitié. Il manque, outre ces deux, le jeune Hulle [Hull] qui

était du même camp et flyharte [Freehearty*] et son homme qui Etait
était du même camp, et flyharte [Freehearty] et son homme qui étaient

campez Environ 2 mill Plus haut Nous avont trouvez 4 des piege
campés environ 2 milles plus haut. Nous avons trouvé 4 des pièges

de se derniers et La place ou les Sauvages les on poursuive mait
de ces derniers et la place où les sauvages les ont poursuivis, mais

nous navont point trouvez la place ou il on Etez tues Dans le
nous n'avons point trouvé la place où ils ont été tués. Dans le

Campement ou les deux premier on Etez tues Nous avon trouves un
campement où les deux premiers ont été tués nous avons trouvés un

Pied noire qui avait aussi Etez tuez et en suivant leure trase
Pied-Noir qui avait aussi été tué, et en suivant leur trace,

Nous avon vus quil En avait une autre de Blesse dangereusement
nous avons vu qu'il y en avait un autre de blessé dangereusement.

tous les Deux Sil le blese meure on recu Leure more de la main
Tous les deux, si le blessé meurt, ont reçu leur mort de la main

de Chique [Cheeks] car il ni a que Lui qui sai defendue Set
de Chique [Cheeks], car il n'y a que lui qui s'est défendu. Cette

malheureuse affaire nous Cause une perte considerable maist Je ne
malheureuse affaire nous cause une perte considérable, mais je ne

croi pas pour Sela de vaire perdre Courage Les ressource de Se
crois pas pour cela devoir perdre courage. Les ressources de ce

payis Son imance en Castors il est vrait que nous ne feront
pays sont immenses en castor. Il est vrai que nous ne ferons

rein Se printemp mait Je me flate que nous feront Lautone pro-
rien ce printemps, mais je me flatte que nous ferons ^ l'automne pro-
[quelque chose]

chaine Jes pert que Dici a mon De pare Jevairais les Ser pent
chaine. J'espère que, d'ici à mon départ, je verrai les Serpents

et les taite plate Mon Intention est de les faire Reste icy Si
et les Tête-plates. Mon intention est de les faire rester ici, si

Je puis et de les Encourage a la Guere Contre Les pied noirs Jus-
je puis, et de les encourager à la guerre contre les Pieds-noirs, jus-

quà Se que nous puission Enprend pri Son nice et en renvoiez
qu'à ce que nous puissions en prendre prisonniers, et en renvoyer

un pour faire des proposion de pais Seque Je croi Serat ayse
un pour faire des propositions de paix, ce que je crois sera aisé

En leur Lesent des traiteurs au bat de la Chute (word torn out)
en leur laissant des traiteurs au bas de la chute [du Missouri.]

Si nous navont point La paix avec Ses ma- (rest of word gone) ou
Si nous n'avons point la paix avec ces ma[udits (?)], ou

quil ne Soi point detruit nous ne devont point panse a
qu'ils ne soient point détruits, nous ne devons point penser à

havoire detablisement icy assure Madame Chouteau de mon es-
avoir d'établissement ici. Assurez Madame Chouteau de mon es-

time la plus Sain Saire ainsi que vos Chers enfants et Croiez Moix
time le plus sincère ainsi que vos chers enfants, et croyez-moi

pour La vie votre Devoues
pour la vie votre devoué.

Pierre Menard
Pierre Menard.

Nous nous atendont tous les jours Devoire
Nous nous attendons tous les jours de voir

les pied noire icy et nous Le desiront
les Pieds-noirs ici, et nous le désirons.

(Address on back of letter)
Monsieur Pierre Chouteau
St. Louis.

Faveur de Mr.
Wm. Bryante

(Brief put on after receipt of letter)
Lettre de Monsr.
P. Menard du
21 Avril 1810.

(Translation.)

THREE FORKS OF THE MISSOURI,
April 21, 1810.

Mr. Pierre Chouteau, Esq.,

DEAR SIR AND BROTHER-IN-LAW:—I had hoped to be able to write you more favorably than I am now able to do. The outlook before us was much more flattering ten days ago than it is today. A party of our hunters was defeated by the Blackfeet on the 12th inst. There were two men killed, all their beaver stolen, many of their traps lost, and the ammunition of several of them, and also seven of our horses. We set out in pursuit of the Indians but unfortunately could not overtake them. We have recovered forty-four traps and three horses, which we brought back here, and we hope to find a few more traps.

This unfortunate affair has quite discouraged our hunters, who are unwilling to hunt any more here. There will start out tomorrow, however, a party of thirty who are all *gens à gage,* fourteen *loués* and sixteen French. They go to the place where the others were defeated. I shall give them only three traps each, not deeming it prudent to risk more, especially since they are not to separate, and half are to remain in camp.

The party which was defeated consisted of eleven persons, and eight or nine of them were absent tending their traps when the savages pounced upon the camp. The two persons killed are James Cheeks, and one Ayres, an *engagé* of Messrs. Crooks and McLellan whom Messrs. Silvester and Auguste [Chouteau] had equipped to hunt on shares. Besides these two, there are missing young Hull who was of the same camp, and Freehearty and his man who were camped about two miles farther up. We have found four traps belonging to these men and the place where they were pursued by the savages, but we have not yet found the place where they were killed.

In the camp where the first two men were killed we found a Blackfoot who had also been killed, and upon following their trail we saw that another had been dangerously wounded. Both of them, if the wounded man dies, came to their death at the hand of Cheeks, for he alone defended himself.

This unhappy miscarriage causes us a considerable loss, but I do not propose on that account to lose heart. The resources of this country in beaver fur are immense. It is true that we shall accomplish nothing this spring, but I trust that we shall next autumn. I hope between now and then to see the Snake and Flathead Indians. My plan is to induce them to stay here, if possible, and make war upon the Blackfeet so that we may take some prisoners and send back one with propositions of peace—which I think can easily be secured by leaving traders among them below the Falls of the Missouri. Unless we can have peace with these (ma—?) or unless they can be destroyed, it is idle to think of maintaining an establishment at this point.

Assure Madame Chouteau of my most sincere esteem as well as your dear children, and believe me always your devoted PIERRE MENARD.

We are daily expecting to see the Blackfeet here and are desirous of meeting them.

(Address on back of letter.)

MONSIEUR PIERRE CHOUTEAU,
St. Louis.

Through the kindness of
Mr. Wm. Bryant.

(Brief on back of letter after receipt.)
Letter from Mr. P. Menard,
April 21, 1810.

B.

LETTER FROM MANUEL LISA TO GENERAL CLARK.

On the conduct of Lisa's office as Indian agent.

St. Louis, July 1st, 1817.

To His Excellency, Governor Clark:

Sir:—I have the honor to remit to you the commission of sub-agent, which you were pleased to bestow upon me, in the summer of 1814, for the Indian nations who inhabit the Missouri river above the mouth of the Kansas, and to pray you to accept my resignation of that appointment.

The circumstances under which I do this, demand of me some exposition of the actual state of these Indians, and of my own conduct during the time of my sub-agency.

Whether I deserve well or ill of the government, depends upon the solution of these questions:

1. Are the Indians of the Missouri more or less friendly to the United States than at the time of my appointment?

2. Are they altered, better or worse, in their own condition at this time?

1. I received this appointment when war was raging between the United States and Great Britain, and when the activity of British emissaries had armed against the Republic all the tribes of the Upper Mississippi and of the northern lakes. Had the Missouri Indians been overlooked by British agents?

No, your excellency will remember that more than a year before the war broke out, I gave you intelligence that the wampum was carrying by British influence along the banks of the Missouri, and that all the nations of this great river were excited to join the universal confederacy then setting on foot, of which the Prophet was the instrument, and British traders the soul. The Indians of the Missouri are to those of the Upper Mississippi as four is to one. Their weight would be great, if thrown into the scale against us. They did not arm against the Republic; on the contrary, they armed against Great Britain and struck the Iowas, the allies of that power.

When peace was proclaimed more than forty chiefs had intelligence with me; and together, we were to carry an expedition of several thousand warriors against the tribes of the Upper Mississippi, and silence them at once. These things are known to your excellency.

To the end of the war, therefore, the Indians of the Missouri continued friends of the United States. How are they today when I come to lay down my appointment? Still friends, hunting in peace upon their own ground, and we trading with them in security, while the Indians of the Upper Mississippi, silenced but not satisfied, give signs of enmity, and require the presence of a military force. And thus the first question resolves itself to my advantage.

2. Before I ascended the Missouri as sub-agent, your excellency remembers what was accustomed to take place. The Indians of that river killed, robbed and pillaged the traders; these practices are no more. Not to mention the others, my own establishments furnish the example of destruction then, of safety now. I have one at the Mahas more than six hundred miles up the Missouri, another at the Sioux, six hundred miles further still. I have from one to two hundred men in my employment, large quantities of horses, and horned cattle, of hogs, of domestic fowls; not one is touched by an Indian; for I count as nothing some solitary thefts at the instigation of white men, my enemies; nor as an act of hostility the death of Pedro Antonio, one of my people, shot this spring, as a man is sometimes shot among us, without being stripped or mutilated. And thus

the morals of these Indians are altered for the better, and the second question equally results to my advantage.

But I have had some success as a trader; and this gives rise to many reports.

"Manuel must cheat the government, and Manuel must cheat the Indians, otherwise Manuel could not bring down every summer so many boats loaded with rich furs."

Good. My accounts with the government will show whether I receive anything out of which to cheat it. A poor five hundred dollars, as sub-agent salary, does not buy the tobacco which I annually give to those who call me father.

Cheat the Indians! The respect and friendship which they have for me, the security of my possessions in the heart of their country, respond to this charge, and declare with voices louder than the tongues of men that it cannot be true.

"But Manuel gets so much rich fur!"

Well, I will explain how I get it. First, I put into my operations great activity; I go a great distance, while some are considering whether they will start today or tomorrow. I impose upon myself great privations; ten months in a year I am buried in the forest, at a vast distance from my own house. I appear as the benefactor, and not as the pillager, of the Indians. I carried among them the seed of the large pompion, from which I have seen in their possession the fruit weighing 160 pounds. Also the large bean, the potato, the turnip; and these vegetables now make a comfortable part of their subsistence, and this year I have promised to carry the plough. Besides, my blacksmiths work incessantly for them, charging nothing. I lend them traps, only demanding preference in their trade. My establishments are the refuge of the weak and of the old men no longer able to follow their lodges; and by these means I have acquired the confidence and friendship of these nations, and the consequent choice of their trade.

These things I have done, and I propose to do more. The Aricaras, the Mandans, the Gros-Ventres, and the Assiniboines, find themselves near the establishment of Lord Selkirk upon the Red river. They can communicate with it in two or three days. The evils of such communication will strike the minds of all persons, and it is for those who can handle the pen to dilate upon them. For me I go to form another establishment to counteract the one in question, and shall labor to draw upon us the esteem of these nations, and to prevent their commerce from passing into the hands of foreigners.

I regret to have troubled your excellency with this exposition. It is right for you to hear what is said of a public agent, and also to weigh it, and to consider the source from which it comes. In ceasing to be in the employment of the United States, I shall not be less devoted to its interests. I have suffered enough in person and property, under a different government, to know how to appreciate the one under which I now live.

I have the honor to be, with the greatest respect, your excellency's obedient servant.

MANUEL LISA.

C.

NOTES ON THE ASTORIAN ENTERPRISE.

Numbers of the Astorians — Arrivals and departures from Astoria — Deaths among the Astorians — Biographical notes — Loss of the *Tonquin*.

THE NUMBER OF THE ASTORIANS.

The Astorians, properly so called, included those persons in the service of the Pacific Fur Company who went to the Columbia by the *Tonquin*, the *Beaver*, or by Hunt's overland expedition. There were a few scattering arrivals besides these. The *Tonquin* arrived within the mouth of the Columbia March 25th, 1811, and the *Beaver* May 9th, 1812. One detachment of Hunt's party arrived January 18, 1812; another February 15, 1812; a third (Crooks and Day) May 10, 1812; and a fourth January 6th, 1813. The principal departures were by the *Tonquin* June 1, 1811; by Stuart's overland expedition June 29, 1812; by the *Pedler*, April 3, 1814; and by the Northwest brigade April 4, 1814.

ARRIVALS.

By the Tonquin: There sailed from New York by the *Tonquin* 22 crew and 33 passengers. There were taken on 24 Sandwich Islanders, making a total of 79. There were left at the Islands 2 (crew) leaving 77 who arrived at the mouth of the Columbia. There were lost in crossing the bar 8 (4 passengers, 3 crew and 1 Sandwich Islander), leaving 69 who entered the Columbia. There sailed on the *Tonquin* 27 (16 crew, 3 Astorians and 8 Islanders). There remained at Astoria 42 (27 whites and 15 Islanders). One of the crew had left the ship and remained at Astoria.

The Overland Expedition—West: The total number of persons who left the Aricara villages July 18, 1811, with Mr. Hunt, was 64, as we learn definitely for the first time on the journey at the Caldron Linn, November 8, 1811. The number is arrived at as follows:

September 2	Left among the Crows Edward Rose	1
October 1	Trapping party detached at Snake river	4
October 10	Trapping party detached at Fort Henry	5
October 28	Antoine Clappine drowned at Caldron Linn	1
October 30	Reed and 3 men set out down river from Caldron Linn, 2 returning	2
October 31	McLellan's party sets out from Caldron Linn	4
October 31	McKenzie's party sets out from Caldron Linn	5
November 9	Hunt's party sets out from Caldron Linn	23
November 9	Crook's party sets out from Caldron Linn	19
		64

This number includes 1 woman and 2 children. The number given by Crooks is 60, but he doubtless omitted Rose and the woman and children.

Jan. 18, 1812, arrived at Astoria	parties of Reed, McLellan and McKenzie	11
Feb. 15 " " " "	Hunt's party	34
May 10 " " " "	Crooks and Day	2
Jan. 6, 1813 " " "	Carson, Delauney, St. Michael, Dubreuil, LaChapelle, Landry, and Turcot	7
Still detached, including Rose (for Cass and Detayé, see next line)		5
Perished—Clappine, Detayé, Cass, Carrière, Provost		5
		64

The total number who reached Astoria was 54.

On the Beaver: Irving says that the *Beaver* sailed with 1 partner, 5 clerks, 15 American laborers and 6 voyageurs, and took on 12 Islanders. One of the company's men died en route which would leave in all 38. Franchère places the number who arrived at Astoria at 33, and Cox, who was one of the passengers, at 36.

Fugitive Arrivals: There were 7 arrivals from various sources, but none of them of importance.

The total number of persons who entered the company's service on the Columbia, including the Islanders and fugitive arrivals, was therefore 144. This is a maximum number, the minimum given by any authority being 135.

PERISHED.

The following is the number of Astorians who are known to have lost their lives during the continuance of the enterprise:

On the Columbia Bar	4
In the *Tonquin* massacre	3
On the *Beaver*	1
Of the Overland Party	5
With Reed on Snake river	10
Lost at Astoria from various causes (Ross)	4
Total	27
Ship crews lost:	
On Columbia Bar (including 1 islander)	4
Tonquin Massacre (including 8 islanders)	24
On the *Beaver*	2
Shipwreck of the *Lark*	8
Total	38
Grand total	65

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTES.

Cox, Ross, was one of the clerks of the Pacific Fur Company; came to Astoria in the *Beaver* and entered the Northwest service in 1813. He was commonly known by the soubriquet of "Little Irishman." He remained on the Columbia six years, ascending the river nine times and descending it eight. His chief importance in Astorian history arises from the fact that he published an account of the enterprise which, although the least trustworthy of the original authorities, is still an important work. Its title is *Adventures on the Columbia River,* London, 1831.

Day, John, a hunter in the overland party under Hunt. According to Irving he was a Virginia backwoodsman, but had for several years been on the Missouri in the service of Crooks and others. He was about forty years old in 1811, six feet two inches high, in form erect, with a step elastic, and "a handsome, open, manly countenance." He was a true representative of the American hunter. He joined Hunt's party and went with the overland expedition to Astoria. He was somewhat broken in health at this time and fell behind with Crooks on Snake river when Hunt went on with the main party in the winter of 1811-12. He and Crooks were robbed of everything and stripped naked in the following spring on the Columbia. A large southern tributary of the Columbia that enters the river at this point is still called John Day's river.

Not liking the prospect at Astoria, Day resolved to return with the overland party under Robert Stuart; but before he reached the Walla Walla he became violently insane and was taken back to Astoria. Irving says that he died within a year, but this must have been a mistake for he was certainly alive in the spring of 1814. As a matter of fact Day seems to have remained in the service of the Northwest Company for upwards of seven years and to have died in the upper Snake river country in 1819. Ross speaks in his *Fur Hunters* of a "defile where the veteran John Day died in 1819," and elsewhere refers to "Day's Valley." It was somewhere near Godin river. Ferris repeatedly refers to this valley as "Day's Defile."

Dorion, Pierre, a half-breed, and son of the Dorion who accompanied Lewis and Clark on a portion of their expedition across the continent. He was hired by Hunt as an interpreter and joined the overland expedition with his Indian wife and two children. He figures frequently in Irving's account of the expedition and generally in an interesting way. His death at the hands of the Indians near Boise river, Idaho, has already been related.

Dorion's wife was a woman of remarkable fortitude and perseverance, as will be seen from her experiences as related in the text. She and her children were still living in Oregon in 1850. One of the boys, Baptiste Dorion, was guide to the naturalist, Townsend, on a trip along the Columbia in 1834.

Franchère, Gabriel, one of the clerks who sailed in the *Tonquin*. His service on the Columbia was entirely at Astoria, and he was an eye witness of all the events which transpired there from March 25, 1811, when the *Tonquin* entered the Columbia, until April 4, 1814, when he left Fort George for home. Whatever is known of Franchère is to his credit. He was a man of ability and strictly honorable in all his relations. It is greatly to his honor that he had no hand in the negotiations connected with the transfer of Astoria and emphatically disapproved of McDougal's conduct.

Franchère did an inestimable service to the cause of Western history in leaving an admirable account of events at Astoria. It is written in a clear, simple and direct style, and is our best authority, except Irving's work, upon Mr. Astor's great enterprise. *Franchère's Narrative* was written in French and published in Montreal, 1819. An edition in English was published in 1854.

Franchère, after his return to Montreal, continued his connection with the fur business. He was engaged to the Northwest Company for several years, and in 1833 was employing men in Montreal for the American Fur Company.

Hunt, Wilson Price, chief partner in the Pacific Fur Company, except Mr. Astor, and leader of the overland Astorian expedition. Born at Asbury, New Jersey, date uncertain. Went to St. Louis in 1804 and was in business with John Hankinson in that city until Mr. Astor began to negotiate with him concerning his proposed enterprise on the Pacific. After the affairs of the Pacific Fur Company were wound up Hunt returned to business in St. Louis. In 1822 he was appointed postmaster of St. Louis by President Monroe. He was one of St. Louis' prominent business men and was highly respected by those who knew him. The events of his life which are most important in the present connection have already been related.

Miller, Joseph, "a gentleman well educated and well informed, and of a respectable family in Baltimore. He had been an officer in the army of the United States, but had resigned in disgust at being refused a furlough, and had taken to trapping beaver and trading with the Indians."

(Irving.) Miller was with Crooks and McLellan in 1809 and joined the Pacific Fur Company with these gentlemen. The same imperious temper which drove him out of the army caused him to quit the new company when Hunt's expedition was about half way across the continent. After spending the fall and winter trapping and roving over the country until from one cause or another he was reduced almost to starvation, he was picked up by Robert Stuart in 1812 and acted as guide to Stuart's party from Snake to Bear river. For this very excellent service he was taken to task by the rest of the party, who thought that he was leading them too far to the south. They accordingly abandoned his guidance and made their senseless detour to the north. Miller's course was exactly right and to him belongs the credit of opening that part of the Oregon Trail which lay between Snake and Bear rivers.

It is quite possible that Miller may have seen Salt Lake in the winter of 1811-12.

Miller returned to St. Louis with Stuart's party and nothing further is known of him.

Reed, John, a clerk in the Pacific Fur Company, an Irishman by birth, and one of the unluckiest of the Astorians. His unfortunate affair with the tin box on the Columbia, and his untimely death on the Boise have already been related. Nothing is known of him except his connection with Astoria.

Ross, Alexander, a clerk of the Pacific Fur Company, who sailed with the *Tonquin*. After the downfall of Astoria he entered the Northwest service and remained there for many years. Much of his work was in the country around the headwaters of the Snake river. The greatest service which Ross performed was the publication of his two works, *Adventures on the Oregon or Columbia river* and *Fur Hunters of the Far West*. Both of these works are valuable contributions to the history of the fur trade.

Stuart, Robert, of Scotch extraction and a nephew of David Stuart. Both were partners in the Pacific Fur Company and both sailed in the *Tonquin*. Young Robert Stuart appears to have been a man of great ability and spirit. It was he who forced Captain Thorn, at the pistol's mouth, to turn about the ship at the Falkland Islands. He was selected to take charge of the returning overland expedition, although he had not crossed the country before and although there were in the party both Crooks and McLellan, who had crossed. After the affairs of the Pacific Fur Company were closed up, Crooks and Stuart entered Mr. Astor's service on the Great Lakes. When Crooks rose to the general agency of the company, Stuart was placed in charge of the Northern Department with headquarters at Michilimackinac. Many of his letters may still be seen in the old Astor letter books.

LOSS OF THE TONQUIN.

The following account of the loss of the *Tonquin* appeared in the *Missouri Gazette* of May 15, 1813, being the first published account of that disaster. It has never before been reproduced.

"Loss of the Ship *Tonquin* near the Mouth of the Columbia.

"A large ship [*The Beaver*] had arrived from New York after a passage of near seven months, with merchandise and provisions for the company. It was here we learnt with sorrow that the story of the *Tonquin* having been cut off was but too true. The circumstances have been related in different ways by the natives in the environs of the establishment, but that which, from their own knowledge, carries with it the greatest appearance of truth is as follows: That vessel, after landing the cargo intended for Astoria, departed on a trading voyage to the coast north of Columbia river with a company of (including officers) 23 men, and had proceeded about 400 miles along the seaboard when they stopped on Vancouver's Island at a place called Woody Point, inhabited by a powerful nation called Wake-a-ninishes. These people came on board to barter their furs for merchandise, and conducted themselves in the most decorous and friendly manner during the first day, but the same evening information was brought on board by an Indian, whom the officers had as interpreter, that the tribe where they then lay were ill-disposed and intended attacking the ship next day. Captain Jonathan Thorn affected to disbelieve this piece of news, and even when the savages came next morning in great numbers, it was only at the pressing remonstrance of Mr. McKay that he ordered seven men aloft to loosen the sails. In the meantime about 50 Indians were permitted to come on board, who traded a number of sea otters for blankets and knives; the former they threw into their canoe as soon as received, but secreted the knives. Every one when armed moved from the quarter deck to different parts of the vessel, so that by the time they were ready, in such a manner were they distributed that at least three savages were opposite every man of the ship, and at a signal given they rushed on their prey, and notwithstanding the brave resistance of every individual of the whites they were all butchered in a few minutes. The men above, in attempting to descend, lost two of their number, besides one mortally wounded, who, notwithstanding his weakened condition, made good his retreat with the four others to the cabin, where, finding a quantity of loaded arms, they fired on their savage assailers through the skylights and companion-way, which had the effect of clearing the ship in a short time, and long before night these five intrepid sons of America were again in full possession of her. Whether from want of abilities or strength, supposing themselves unable to take the vessel back to Columbia, it cannot be ascertained. This fact only is known, that between the time the Indians were driven from the ship and the following morning, the four who were unhurt left her in the long boat in hopes of regaining the river, wishing to take along with them the wounded person, who refused their offer saying that he must die before long and was as well in the vessel as elsewhere.

"Soon after sunrise she was surrounded by an immense number of Indians in canoes [who had] come for the express purpose of unloading her, but who, from the warm reception they met with the day before, did not seem to vie with each other in boarding.

"The wounded man showing himself over the railing, made signs that he was alone and wanted their assistance, on which some embarked, who, finding what he said was true, spoke to their people wno were not any longer slow in getting on board; so that in a few seconds the deck was considerably thronged, and they proceeded to undo the hatches without further ceremony.

"No sooner were they completely engaged in thus finishing this most diabolical of actions, than the only survivor of the crew descended into the cabin and set fire to the magazine containing nearly nine thousand pounds of gunpowder, which in an instant blew the vessel and every one on board to atoms.

"The nation acknowledge their having lost nearly one hundred warriors, besides a vast number wounded, by the explosion, who were in canoes round the ship. It is impossible to tell who the person was that so completely avenged himself, but there cannot exist a single doubt that the act will teach these villains better manners and will eventually be of immense benefit to the coasting trade. The four men who set off in the long boat were two or three days after driven ashore in a gale and massacred by the natives."

D.

THE "FLATHEAD DEPUTATION" OF 1832.

[Letter from G. P. Disoway to the *Christian Advocate and Journal and Zion's Herald*, Friday, March 1, 1833.]

THE FLATHEAD INDIANS.

The plans to civilize the savage tribes of our country are among the most remarkable signs of the times. To meliorate the condition of the Indians, and to preserve them from gradual decline and extinction, the government of the United States have proposed and already commenced removing them to the region westward of the Mississippi. Here it is intended to establish them in a permanent residence. Some powerful nations of these aborigines, having accepted the proposal, have already emigrated to their new lands, and others are now preparing to follow them. Among those who still remain are the Wyandots, a tribe long distinguished as standing at the head of the great Indian family.

The earliest travelers in Canada first discovered this tribe while ascending the St. Lawrence, at Montreal. They were subsequently driven by the Iroquois, in one of those fierce internal wars that characterize the Indians of North America, to the northern shores of Lake Huron. From this resting place also their relentless enemy literally hunted them until the remnant of this once powerful and proud tribe found a safe abode among the Sioux, who resided west of Lake Superior. When the power of the Iroquois was weakened by the French the Wyandots returned from the Sioux country, and settled near Michilimackinac. They finally took up their abode on the plains of Sandusky, in Ohio, where they continue to this day.

The Wyandots, amounting to five hundred, are the only Indians in Ohio who have determined to remain upon their lands. The Senecas, Shawnees, and Ottawas have all sold their Ohio possessions, and have either removed or are on their way to the west of the Mississippi. A small band of about seventy Wyandots from the Big Spring have disposed of their reservation of 16,000 acres, but have not accepted the offered lands of the government in exchange. They will retire into Michigan, or Canada, after leaving some of their number at the main reservation of Upper Sandusky.

The wonderful effects of the Gospel among the Wyandots are well known. Providence has blessed in a most remarkable manner the labors of our missionaries for their conversion. Knowledge, civilization, and social comforts have followed the introduction of Christianity into their regions. To all of the Indians residing within the jurisdiction of the states or territories the United States propose to purchase their present possessions and improvements, and in return to pay them acre for acre with lands west of the Mississippi river. Among the inducements to make this exchange are the following: perpetuity in their new abodes, as the faith of the government is pledged never to sanction another removal; the organization of a territorial government for their use like those in Florida, Arkansas, and Michigan, and the privilege to send delegates to Congress, as is now enjoyed by the other territories. Could the remaining tribes of the original possessors of this country place implicit reliance upon these assurances and prospects, this scheme to meliorate their condition, and to bring them within the pale of civilized life, might safely be pronounced great, humane, and rational.

The Wyandots, after urgent and often repeated solicitations of the government for their removal, wisely resolved to send agents to explore the region offered them in exchange, before they made any decision upon the proposal. In November last the party started on the exploring expedition, and visited their proposed residence. This was a tract of country containing about 200,000 acres, and situated between the western part of Missouri and the Missouri river. The location was found to be one altogether unsuitable to the views, the necessities, and the support of the nation. They consequently declined the exchange.

Since their return, one of the exploring party, Mr. Wm. Walker, an interpreter, and himself a member of the nation, has sent me a communication. As it contains some valuable facts of a region from which we seldom hear, the letter is now offered for publication.

Upper Sandusky, Jan. 19, 1833.

Dear Friend:—Your last letter, dated Nov. 12, came duly to hand. The business part is answered in another communication which is inclosed.

I deeply regret that I have had no opportunity of answering your very friendly letter in a manner that would be satisfactory to myself; neither can I now, owing to a want of time and a retired place, where I can write undisturbed.

You, no doubt, can fancy me seated in my small dwelling, at the dining table, attempting to write, while my youngest (sweet little urchin!) is pulling my pocket-handkerchief out of my pocket, and Henry Clay, my only son, is teasing me to pronounce a word he has found in his little spelling book. This done, a loud rap is heard at my door, and two or three of my Wyandot friends make their appearance, and are on some business. I drop my pen, dispatch the business, and resume it.

The country we explored is truly a land of savages. It is wild and romantic; it is a champaign, but beautifully undulated country. You can travel in some parts for whole days and not find timber enough to afford a riding switch, especially after you get off the Missouri and her principal tributary streams. The soil is generally a dark loam, but not of a durable kind for agriculture. As a country for agricultural pursuits, it is far inferior to what it has been represented to be. It is deplorably defective in timber. There are millions of acres on which you cannot procure timber enough to make a chicken coop. Those parts that are timbered are on some of the principal streams emptying into the great Missouri, and are very broken, rough, and cut up with deep ravines; and the timber, what there is of it, is of an inferior quality, generally a small growth of white, black, and bur oaks; hickory, ash, buckeye, mulberry, linwood, coffee bean, a low scrubby kind of birch, red and slippy elm, and a few scattering walnut trees. It is remarkable, in all our travels west of the Mississippi river, we never found even one solitary poplar, beech, pine, or sassafras tree, though we were informed that higher up the Missouri river, above Council Bluffs, pine trees abound to a great extent, especially the nearer you approach the Rocky mountains. The immense country embraced between the western line of the state of Missouri, and the territory of Arkansas, and the eastern base of the Rocky mountains on the west, and Texas and Santa Fe on the south, is inhabited by the Osage, Sioux (pronounced Sooz), Pawnees, Comanches, Pancahs, Arrapohoes, Assinaboins, Riccarees, Yanktons, Omahaws, Blackfeet, Ottoes, Crow Indians, Sacs, Foxes, and Iowas; all a wild, fierce, and war-like people. West of the mountains reside the Flatheads, and many other tribes, whose names I do not now recollect.

I will here relate an anecdote, if I may so call it. Immediately after we landed in St. Louis, on our way to the West, I proceeded to Gen. Clark's, superintendent of Indian affairs, to present our letters of introduction from the Secretary of War, and to receive the same from him to the different Indian agents in the upper country. While in his office and transacting business with him, he informed me that three chiefs from the Flathead nation were in his house, and were quite sick, and that one (the fourth) had died a few days ago. They were from the west of the Rocky mountains. Curiosity prompted me to step into the adjoining room to see them, having never seen any, but often heard of them. I was struck with their appearance. They differ in appearance from any tribe of Indians I have ever seen: small in size, delicately formed, small limbs, and the most exact symmetry throughout, except the head. I had always supposed from their being called "Flatheads," that the head was actually flat on top; but this is not the case. The head is flattened thus:

From the point of the nose to the apex of the head, there is a perfect straight line, the protuberance of the forehead is flattened or leveled. You may form some idea of the shape of their heads from the rough sketch I have made with the pen, though I confess I have drawn most too long a proboscis for a flat-head. This is produced by a pressure upon the cranium while in infancy. The distance they had traveled on foot was nearly three thousand miles to see Gen. Clark, their great father, as they called him, he being the first American officer they ever became acquainted with, and having much confidence in him, they had come to consult him as they said, upon very important matters. Gen. C. related to me the object of their mission, and, my dear friend, it is impossible for me to describe to you my feelings while listening to his narrative. I will here relate it as briefly as I well can. It appeared that some white man had penetrated into their country, and happened to be a spectator at one of their religious ceremonies, which they scrupulously perform at stated periods. He informed them that their mode of worshipping the supreme Being was radically wrong, and instead of being acceptable and pleasing, it was displeasing to him; he also informed them that the white people *away* toward the rising of the sun had been put in possession of the true mode of worshipping the great Spirit. They had a book containing directions how to conduct themselves in order to enjoy his favor and hold converse with him; and with this guide, no one need go astray; but every one that would follow the directions laid down there could enjoy, in this life, his favor, and after death would be received into the country where the great Spirit resides, and live for ever with him.

Upon receiving this information, they called a national council to take this subject into consideration. Some said, if this be true, it is certainly high time we were put in possession of this mode, and if *our* mode of worshipping be wrong and displeasing to the great Spirit, it is time we had laid it aside. We must know something about this, it is a matter that cannot be put off, the sooner we know it the better. They accordingly deputed four of the chiefs to proceed to St. Louis to see their great father, Gen. Clark, to inquire of him, having no doubt but he would tell them the whole truth about it.

They arrived at St. Louis, and presented themselves to Gen. C. The latter was somewhat puzzled being sensible of the responsibility that rested on him; he, however, proceeded by informing them that what they had been told by the white man in their own country was true. Then went into a succinct history of man, from his creation down to the advent of the Saviour; explained to them all the moral precepts contained in the Bible, expounded to them the decalogue; informed them of the advent of the Saviour, his life, precepts, his death, resurrection, ascension, and the relation he now stands to man as a mediator—that he will judge the world, etc.

Poor fellows, they were not all permitted to return home to their people with the intelligence. Two died in St. Louis, and the remaining two, though somewhat indisposed, set out for their native land. Whether they reached home or not is not known. The change of climate and diet operated very severely upon their health. Their diet when at home is chiefly vegetables and fish.

If they died on their way home, peace be to their manes! They died inquirers after the truth. I was informed that the Flatheads, as a nation, have the fewest vices of any tribe of Indians on the continent of America.

I had just concluded I would lay this rough and uncouth scroll aside and revise it before I would send it, but if I lay it aside you will never receive it; so I will send it to you just as it is, "with all its imperfections," hoping that you may be able to decipher it. You are at liberty to make what use you please of it. Yours in haste,

WM. WALKER.

G. P. Disoway, Esq.

The most singular custom of flattening the head prevails among all the Indian nations west of the Rocky mountains. It is most common along the lower parts of the Columbia river, but diminishes in traveling eastward, until it is to be scarcely seen in the remote tribes near the mountains. Here the folly is confined to a few females only. The practice must have commenced at a very early period, as Columbus noticed it among the first objects that struck his attention. An essential point of beauty with those savages is a *flat head.* Immediately after the birth of the child the mother, anxious to procure the recommendation of a broad forehead for her infant, places it in the compressing machine. This is a cradle formed like a trough, with one end where the head reposes more elevated than the other. A padding is then placed upon the forehead, which presses against the head by cords passing through holes on each side of the cradle. The child is kept in this manner upward of a year, and the operation is so gradual as to be attended with scarcely any pain. During this period of compression the infant presents a frightful appearance, its little keen black eyes being forced out to an unnatural degree by the pressure of bandages. When released from this process the head is flattened, and seldom exceeds more than one or two inches in thickness. Nature with all its efforts can never afterward restore the proper shape. The heads of grown persons often form a straight line from the nose to the top of the forehead. From the outlines of the face in Mr. Walker's communication I have endeavored to sketch a Flathead for the purpose of illustrating more clearly this most strange custom. The dotted lines will show the usual rotundity of a human head, and the cut how widely a Flathead differs from the rest of the great family of man. So great is this difference as to compel anatomists themselves to confess that an examination of such skulls and ocular demonstration only could have convinced them of the possibility of moulding the head into this form. The "human face Divine" is thus sacrificed to fantastic ideas of savage beauty. They allege also, as an apology for this custom, that their slaves have round heads, and that the children of a brave and free race ought not to suffer such a degradation.

This deformity, however, of the Flathead Indians is redeemed by other numerous good qualities. Travelers relate that they have fewer vices than any of the tribes in those regions. They are honest, brave, and peaceable. The women become exemplary wives and mothers, and a husband with an unfaithful companion is a circumstance almost unknown among them. They believe in the existence of a good and evil Spirit, with rewards and punishments of a future state. Their religion promises to the virtuous after death a climate where perpetual summer will shine over plains filled with their much beloved buffalo, and upon streams abounding in the most delicious fish. Here they will spend their time in hunting and fishing, happy and undisturbed from every enemy; while the bad Indian will be consigned to a place of eternal snows, with fires in his sight that he cannot enjoy, and buffalo and deer that cannot be caught to satisfy his hunger.

A curious tradition prevails among them concerning beavers. These animals, so celebrated for their sagacity, they believe are a fallen race of Indians, who have been condemned on account of their wickedness by the great Spirit, to their present form of the brute creation. At some future period they also declare that these fallen creatures will be restored to their former state.

How deeply touching is the circumstance of the four natives traveling on foot 3,000 miles through thick forests and extensive prairies, sincere searchers after truth! The story has scarcely a parallel in history. What a touching theme does it form for the imagination and pen of a Montgomery, a Mrs. Hemans, or our own fair Sigourney! With what intense concern will men of God whose souls are fired with holy zeal for the salvation of their fellow beings, read their history! There are immense plains, mountains, and forests in those regions whence they came, the abodes of numerous savage tribes. But no apostle of Christ has yet had the courage to penetrate into their moral darkness. Adventurous and daring fur traders only have visited these regions, unknown to the rest of the world, except from their own accounts of them. If the Father of spirits, as revealed by Jesus Christ, is not known in these interior wilds of America, they nevertheless often resound the praises of the unknown, invisible great Spirit, as he is denominated by the savages. They are not ignorant of the immortality of their souls, and speak of some future delicious island or country where departed spirits rest. May we not indulge the hope that the day is not far distant when the missionaries will penetrate into these wilds where the Sabbath bell has never yet tolled since the world began! There is not, perhaps, west of the Rocky mountains, any portion of the Indians that presents at this moment a spectacle so full of interest to the contemplative mind as the Flathead tribe. Not a thought of converting or civilizing them ever enters the mind of the sordid, demoralizing hunters and fur traders. These simple children of nature even shrink from the loose morality and inhumanities often introduced among them by the white man. Let the Church awake from her slumbers and go forth in her strength to the salvation of these wandering sons of our native forests. We are citizens of this vast universe, and our life embraces not merely a moment, but eternity itself. Thus exalted, what can be more worthy of our high destination than to befriend our species and those efforts that are making to release immortal spirits from the chains of error and superstition, and to bring them to the knowledge of the true God. G. P. D.

New York, Feb. 18, 1833.

[The following letters were published in the *Christian Advocate* of May 10, 1833.]

THE FLATHEAD INDIANS.

The following correspondence and communication will be read with great interest. Is it not the voice of Heaven to us? The field opens gloriously. Read Mr. M'Allister's letter below. The men are ready; let the Missionary Society have the means. Let the whole Church become a missionary band; not for this object particularly, but for every object. These documents necessarily shorten our notice of the missionary anniversary of our Church, held on the evening of the 23d of April, but we shall continue it in our next.

St. Louis, Mo., April 16. [1833.]

Dear Brethren:—The communication respecting the Flat Head Indians, which appeared a few weeks since in your paper, and the call of Dr. Fisk, have excited considerable attention. I have just received a letter from Brother Brunson, propounding several questions, which he wished me to have answered here, so that the desired information might be rendered available to the Christian public. I called immediately upon Gen. Clark, who received me kindly. He informed me he was just answering, or had just answered, some communications upon the subject. I was struck with the propriety of an immediate communication from this place; I therefore send you this, sincerely wishing it may be useful.

Gen. Clark informed me that the publication which had appeared in the *Advocate* was correct. Of the return of the two Indians nothing is known. He informed me the cause of their visit was the following: Two of their number had received an education at some Jesuitical school in Montreal, Canada, had returned to the tribe, and endeavored, as far as possible, to instruct their brethren how the whites approached the Great Spirit. The consequence was a spirit of inquiry was aroused, a deputation appointed, and a tedious journey of three thousand miles performed, to learn for themselves of Jesus and him crucified. Will not these Indians rise up in the day of judgment to the condemnation of hundreds and thousands who live and die unforgiven in Christian lands?

I had the good fortune to become acquainted with Mr. Campbell, who was one of the first traders among those Indians. He left on yesterday for the Rocky mountains and the country beyond. A few hours before his departure he favored me with the enclosed letter, which I wish you to publish with these remarks. Mr. Campbell is a very intelligent and gentlemanly man, and you may rely upon his information.
Yours as ever,
E. W. SEHON.

Rev. Mr. Sehon:

DEAR SIR:—In compliance with your request I shall give you a few very brief answers to the questions you have put respecting the Flat Head Indians.

1. Prospects of a mission? I cannot pretend to say what prospects there would be in a religious point of view. The Flat Head Indians are proverbial for their mild disposition and friendship to the whites, and I have little hesitation in saying a missionary would be treated by them with kindness.

2. Distance from St. Louis to Council Bluffs? The distance is about five hundred miles.

3. Whether suitable interpreters can be obtained for the Flat Head Indians? There would be some difficulty to have religious matters explained, because the best interpreters are half-Indians, that you could not explain to their minds the matter you would require to have told to the Indians.

4. The number of the Indians? There are about forty lodges of these Indians, averaging, say seven Indians to a lodge.

5. Do steamers go as far as the Council Bluffs? With the exception of the American Fur Company's steamboats, which ascend as high as the Yellow Stone, none go as far as the Bluffs.

6. Do fur traders go to the Flat Head country, and at what seasons of the year, and will they allow the missionaries to go in their company? There is every season one or more companies leaving St. Louis in the month of March, and I doubt not but they would willingly allow a missionary to accompany them; but the privations that a gentleman of that profession would have to encounter would be very great, as the shortest route that he would have by land would not be less than one thousand miles, and when he reached his destination he would have to travel with the Indians, as they have no permanent villages, nor have the traders any houses, but, like the Indian, move in their leather lodges from place to place throughout the season.

Very respectfully, your obedient servant,

ROBERT CAMPBELL.

St. Louis, April 13, 1833.

ST. LOUIS, April 17, 1833.

MESSRS. EDITORS:—The visit of the Flat Head and Nose Pierce, or Pierced Nose, Indians to our place to inquire of the white man how he ascertains the will of the Great Spirit, has excited much interest in their behalf among the benevolent in different parts of the United States, and well it may, when we consider the distance they traveled, and the countless hardships they endured to learn by what means we have access into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in the hope of the resurrection of the dead and the glory of God. Interrogatories have been proposed in reference to the tribe or band of Flat Heads, who sent the deputation to this city to wait on Gen. Clark, and in answering the question as to their number, Mr. Campbell confines his answer to that particular band, and states the number at about two hundred and eighty. This statement, though strictly true and fully covering the inquiry proposed, might induce many not otherwise informed to suppose that the Flat Heads constitute a mere handful of people buried in the deep recesses of the stony mountains, near three thousand miles from the abodes of civilized man, and are scarcely worth looking after. This is not the fact: the deputation was from the Cho-pun-ish tribe, residing on Lewis river, above and below the mouth of the Koos-koos-ka river, and a small band of Flat Heads who live with them. The Cho-pun-ish or Pierce Nose Indians are about seven thousand in number, according to Gen. Clark's account.

The Indians residing on the tide water of the Oregon and below the great falls are about eight thousand in number. Those residing on the northwest of the Oregon, on the coast of the Pacific, number about six thousand. Those on the southwest on the same coast number about ten thousand two hundred; all these Indians are Flat Heads except one tribe—the Cook-koo-oose—living on the coast of the Pacific; these do not flatten the head, and are fairer in their complexion, and number about fifteen hundred. The Flat Heads living on Kilmox bay speak the same language with the Lucktons, Ka-kun-kle, Lick-a-wis, Yorich-cone, Neek-e-to, Ul-le-ah, You-itts, Shia Stuck-kle, and Kila-evats. The presumption is that it is the vernacular language of all those tribes living on the Oregon below the Great Falls and on the Pacific coast, northwest and southwest of the mouth of the Oregon. Gen. Clark discovered on the waters of the Oregon and coast of the Pacific more than sixty tribes of Indians, numbering about eighty thousand souls. It is not, however, to be presumed that his account is complete. It is highly probable that the coast of the eastern Pacific is frequented by Indians from Behring's Straits to Upper California, and many tribes no doubt exist in the interior both south and north of the Oregon, which did not come to the knowledge of Messrs. Lewis and Clark.

How ominous this visit of the Cho-pun-nish and Flat Head Indians! How loud the call to the missionary spirit of the age! It calls to my mind a declaration made by Bishop Soule, when preaching at a camp in this country. Speaking of the missionary zeal of the Methodist preachers, of their extended field of labors, their untiring perseverance to compass the earth and spread Scriptural holiness through all the world: "We will not cease," said he, "until we shall have planted the standard of Christianity high on the summit of the Stony Mountains."

Already would it seem that a door is open, and the Indians from the lofty summit of the Rocky mountains look far east with burning desire to behold the coming of the messenger of God. Among the Cho-pun-nish and Flat Heads of Lewis river the work will commence; the honesty, hospitality, docility, and mildness of these Indians strongly recommended them first to the consideration of the civilian and Christian missionary; here the missionary may learn perhaps the language spoken by those of Kil-a-man bay on the Pacific: this will give access to perhaps twenty or thirty thousand below the Great Falls and on the Pacific.

One word more and I shall close. Many of our fellow-citizens have gone from this country so diseased as to render it doubtful whether they could ever reach the mountains and have returned from thence with constitutions restored and health renewed, to the astonishment of all that knew them. If you think the information herein contained would serve the purposes of Christian benevolence, give it a place in your Journal.

Yours affectionately,

A. M'ALLISTER.

E.

MISCELLANEOUS DATA RELATING TO THE FUR TRADE.

State of the fur trade in 1831 — General Ashley's method of moving parties through the Indian country — A fur hunter's business accounts.

STATE OF THE FUR TRADE IN 1831.

[Letter from Thomas Forsyth to Lewis Cass, Secretary of War, Manuscript Department, State Historical Society of Wisconsin.]

St. Louis, October 24, 1831.

Sir:—In compliance with the request contained in your letter of the 9th ultimo, I have the honor to give the following as answers to your queries. I am sorry to say that these answers are not so complete as I would wish them to be, but it seems impossible to collect more detailed or comprehensive information in this country on the subject of the trade from this place to Mexico and to the base and west of the Rocky mountains. Several persons with whom I have conversed, and who have decidedly the best knowledge of the subject, are unwilling to say anything about it, while others, who pretend to much knowledge of the business, are too ignorant to give even a plain common account, but tell so many wild stories and deal so much in the marvelous, that it appears unsafe to depend on anything they relate—

THE FUR TRADE ON THE FRONTIERS.

The fur trade of the countries bordering on the Mississippi and Missouri rivers, as high up the former river as above the Falls of St. Anthony, and the latter as the Sioux establishment some distance above Council Bluffs, is carried on now in the same manner as it ever has been. This trade continues to be monopolized by the American Fur Company, who have divided the whole of the Indian country into departments as follows: Farnham & Davenport have all the country of the Sauk and Fox Indians, as high up the Mississippi river as Dubuque's mines (without including the Fox Indians who reside at that place) as also all the Winnebago and other Indians who reside on the lower parts of Rock river; also the Iowa Indians who live at or near the [Black] Snake Hills on the Missouri river. The division of Mr. Rolette includes all the Indians from Dubuque's mines to a point above the Falls of St. Anthony, and up the St. Peters [Minnesota] river to its source, as also all the Indians on the Wisconsin and upper parts of Rock river. Mr. Cabanne (who is a member of the American Fur Company) has in his division all the Indians on the Missouri as high as a point above the Council Bluffs, including the Pawnee Indians of the interior, in about a southwest direction from his establishment. Mr. Auguste P. Chouteau has within his department all the Indians of the Osage country and others who may visit his establishment, such as the Cherokees, Chickasaws, and other Indians. Messrs. McKenzie, Laidlaw & Lamont have in their limits the Sioux Indians of the Missouri, and as high up the river as they choose to send or go. The American Fur Company bring on their goods annually in the spring season to this city from New York, which are then sent up the Missouri river to the different posts in a small steamboat. At those places the furs are received on board and brought down to St. Louis, where they are opened, counted, weighed, repacked, and shipped by steamboats to New Orleans, thence on board of vessels to New York, where the furs are unpacked, made up into bales, and sent to the best markets in Europe, except some of the finest (particularly otter skins), which are sent to China.

Mr. Rolette procures his goods at Mackinaw, takes them on in Mackinaw boats to Prairie du Chien (by way of Green

Bay, the Fox and Wisconsin rivers), where he assorts them. They are then forwarded, by clerks hired for the purpose, with the same boats and men, to the different trading posts. Farnham & Davenport take up their goods from this city to the Indian villages in keelboats, with their clerks and men. M^r^. Cabanne and M^r^. M^c^Kenzie & Company take up their goods in the American Fur Company steamboats as before stated. The goods of M^r^. A. P. Chouteau are transported by water in keelboats, as high up the Osage river as the water will admit; from thence they are carried in wagons to his establishment in the interior of the country. In the spring of the year when the Arkansaw is high M^r^. Chouteau sends his furs down that river to New Orleans from whence they are shipped to New York.[1]

By the time that the Indians have gathered their corn, the traders are prepared with their goods to give them credits. The articles of merchandise which the traders take with them to the Indian country are as follows: viz., blankets 3 points, 2½, 2, 1½, 1; common blue stroud; ditto red; blue cloth; scarlet do; calicoes; domestic cottons; rifles and shot guns, gunpowder, flints, and lead; knives of different kinds; looking glasses; vermilion and verdigris; copper, brass, and tin kettles; beaver and muskrat traps; fine and common bridles and spurs; silverworks; needles and thread; wampum; horses; tomahawks and half axes, etc. All traders at the present day give credit to the Indians in the same manner as has been the case for the last sixty or eighty years. That is to say, the articles which are passed on credit are given at very high prices. Formerly, when the opposition and competition in the Indian trade were great, the traders would sell in the spring of the year, payment down, for less than one-half of the prices at which they charged the same articles to the same Indians on credit the preceding autumn. This was sometimes the occasion of broils and quarrels between the traders and the Indians, particularly when the latter made bad hunts.

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[1] The reader will remember that the two principal divisions of the American Fur Company's field of operations were the Northern Department, headquarters at Michilimacinac, and the Western Department, headquarters at St. Louis. What the writer here calls departments were really sub-departments of these two. Rolette belonged to the Northern Department, Farnham and Davenport to the Western Department, as of course did the Missouri traders. Whether Auguste P. Chouteau, who controlled the trade with the Osage Indians, was connected with the American Fur Company, or wholly independent of it, is not very clear from the records.

The following are the prices charged for some articles given on credit to the Sauk and Fox Indians, whose present population exceeds six thousand souls and who are compelled to take goods, etc., of the traders at their very high prices, because they cannot do without them, for if the traders do not supply their necessary wants and enable them to support themselves, they would literally starve. An Indian takes on credit from a trader in the autumn—

A 3-point blanket at	$10.00
A rifle gun	30.00
A pound of gunpowder	4.00
Total Indian dollars	$44.00

The 3-point blanket will cost in England, say 16 shillings per pair	
1 blanket at 100 per cent is equal to	$ 3.52
A rifle gun costs in this place from $12 to	13.00
A pound of gunpowder	.20
	$16.72
Add 25 per cent for expenses	4.18
	$20.90

Therefore, according to this calculation (which I know is correct), if the Indian pays all his debt, the trader is a gainer of more than 100 per cent. But it must be here observed that the trader takes for a dollar a large buckskin, which may weigh six pounds, or two doeskins, four muskrats, four or five raccoons, or he allows the Indian three dollars for an otterskin, or two dollars a pound for beaver. And in my opinion the dollar which the trader receives of the Indian is not estimated too high at 125 cents, and perhaps in some instances at 150 cents.

In the spring the trader lowers his price on all goods, and will sell a 3-point blanket for five dollars, and other articles in proportion as he receives the furs down in payment, and as the Indians always reserve the finest and best furs for the spring trade. In the autumn of every year the trader carefully avoids giving credit to the Indians on any costly articles, such as silverworks, wampum, scarlet cloth, fine bridles, etc., unless it be to an Indian who he knows will pay all his debt; in which case he will allow the Indian on credit everything he wishes. Traders always prefer giving on credit gunpowder, flints, lead, knives, tomahawks, hoes, domestic cottons, etc., which they do at the rate of 300 or 400 per cent, and if one-fourth of the prices of those articles be paid, *he* is *amply* paid. After all the trade is over in the spring it is found that some of the Indians have paid all for which they were credited, others one-half, one-third, one-fourth, and some nothing at all; but taken altogether, the trader has received on an average one-half of the whole amount of Indian dollars for which he gave credit the preceding autumn, and calls it a tolerable business; that is, if the furs bear a good price the trader loses nothing, but if any fall in the price takes place he loses money.

The American Fur Company ought to be satisfied with the Indians, for they have monopolized all the trade, especially at the posts before mentioned. There is a man now in this city who receives annually a sum from that company on condition that he will not enter the Indian country.[3] They have also monopolized the whole trade on the frontiers together with the Indian annuities, and everything an Indian has to sell, yet they claim a large amount for debts due them for non-payment of credits given to the Indians at different periods.

TRADE TO AND WEST OF THE ROCKY MOUNTAINS.

I visited this country as early as April, 1798, and in many conversations I had with the French people of this place, all that they could say on the subject of the Indian trade was that there were many Indian nations inhabiting the country bordering on the Missouri river who were exceedingly cruel to all the white people that went among them. The highest point then known up the Missouri river was Cedar Island, which is somewhere in the Arikara country. The Arikara, Mandan, Blackfeet, Crow, Arapahoe, Assiniboin, and other Indians were well known in those days (1800) to the Hudson Bay and Northwest Companies. Clerks belonging to those companies with their men would visit the Missouri annually at different places for the purpose of trading with the Indians.

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[3] It is difficult to imagine who this individual was, if not General William H. Ashley, the founder of the Rocky Mountain Fur Company.

After the arrival of Lewis and Clark from the Pacific, a company was organized at this place for the purpose of trading with the Indians up the Missouri river to its forks and higher if necessary. That company did not exist long, as it appeared they were deficient in management and understanding of their new business. After their dissolution a M^{r}. Manuel Lisa carried on a trade with the nations as high up as the Sioux Indians. He afterwards with others formed a company who extended their trade up the Missouri river to the Mandan villages. M^{r}. Manuel Lisa appeared quite sanguine of success, having the sole management of this company, and it is supposed by some people that if he had been well assisted by his partners, he might have done something; but all his endeavors fell to the ground, and he died some years ago, insolvent. M^{r}. Manuel Lisa and his partners followed the custom of employing men to hunt in the Indian country.

After the war with Great Britain commenced our Indian trade almost ceased to exist, except where it was continued by some few hunters who got up among the Indians and would, in the spring season, bring down a few furs; yet the Hudson Bay and the Northwest companies at the same time extended their trade, and sent hunting parties to different points on the Missouri river as also to the Rocky mountains. This kind of trade or business of hunting was conducted on a small scale until General Ashley took it in hand about the year 1821 or 2, when he took a number of hunters up towards the mountains as also some goods to trade with the Indians.

In 1823 Gen^l. Ashley was attacked by the Arikaras. He then descended the Missouri river to Council Bluffs when Colonel Leavenworth went up (Gen^l. Ashley and party being in company) and severely punished the Indians for their audacity. After this Gen^l. Ashley took more men as hunters and more goods up towards the base of the Rocky mountains. About this time (say 1824-5) Gen^l. Ashley was nearly one hundred thousand dollars in debt, as I have been informed, since which he has paid off all his debts and has now an independent fortune.

Some years back Gen^l. Ashley extended his trade and hunting excursions west of the mountains, but he has since sold out to Messr^s. Sublette, Jackson & Smith and now has nothing more to do with the business either of hunting or trading about the mountains. He brings on goods &^{c}. from the eastward to this city and furnishes Sublette, Jackson & Smith with all they require and receives annually from them their furs in payment. Sublette & C^o. transport their goods by water from this place up the Missouri to the Little Platte, thence in wagons to a given point on the Missouri river east of the mountains, as also round a spur of the mountains to the waters of Columbia. From what I can learn, there is but little trading done on either side of the Rocky mountains by Sublette, Jackson & Smith. It is altogether by hunting that they collect so many furs.

In the Hudson Bay establishments on Red river there are many half-breeds who are altogether brought up to hunting. They were formerly provided with an outfit to hunt by some of the Hudson Bay trading establishments, so that they became well acquainted with all the country on each side of the Rocky mountains. From them the Hudson Bay Company collected much fur. But Gen^l. Ashley (as I have been told) has had the address to gain over many of those half-breeds to the American concern, by which means the returns of fur to the Hudson Bay establishments have been much curtailed.

Messr^s. M^{c}Kenzie, Laidlaw and Lamont are three young Scotchmen, of whom the two former were once in the employ of the Hudson Bay Company. But when that company and the Northwest Company joined their concerns together, about nine hundred clerks and men were dismissed that service. M^{c}Kenzie and Laidlaw were among that number, and coming to St. Louis, they formed a concern with Lamont and others, calling themselves the Columbia Fur Company and trading under that firm. They were unsuccessful at the commencement and at one time were forty or fifty thousand dollars in debt, but one fortunate season of trade enabled them to pay off all their debts, leaving much money for themselves. After this they made arrangements with the American Fur Company for goods, and have been doing a good business ever since, so as to be now wealthy. Messr^s. M^{c}Kenzie & C^o. send goods and hunters up the Missouri river from their establishments, toward the mountains, and from the knowledge M^{c}Kenzie and Laidlaw obtained (during their employment in the Hudson Bay Company) of the country and Indians, they now trade with the Blackfeet and other Indians who always heretofore were in favour of the Hudson Bay Company. Perhaps it would not be exceeding the truth to say that half a million of dollars in furs are now annually brought down the Missouri river that formerly went to Hudson Bay, and it is the enterprising spirit of Gen^l. Ashley which has occasioned the change of this channel of trade.

All traders procure as much wild meat as possible from the Indians, but where this article is scarce they have the precaution to take provisions with them in the fall of the year as they go into the Indian country. I am informed that Mr. A. P. Chouteau has a very large farming establishment in the Osage country, where he raises every article of necessary food and in greater abundance than is necessary for himself, his very numerous family and followers. Messr^s. M^{c}Kenzie & C^o. have some domestic animals at their establishment; but the buffalo, elk, bear and deer (particularly the buffalo) are so numerous that they are never in want of provisions of the meat kind. Their corn they can obtain in abundance from the Arikara and Mandan Indians and they can be supplied with a little flour from St. Louis so that they can never be in want. It is said that Sublette, Jackson and Smith take with them some horned cattle, which they drive with their wagons and which serve for provisions until they reach the buffalo country.

It is impossible for me to ascertain the number of lives that have been lost on the routes to and from the Rocky mountains or Mexico. In the Indian country bordering on the frontiers no lives have been lost, according to my present recollection for the last fifteen years, except Findley and two others on Lake Pepin in the summer of 1824, and two men by the Winnebagos near Prairie du Chien in the summer of 1828. Smith (the partner of Sublette and Jackson) was killed this past summer on his way to Santa Fe, having gone that way with some goods.

I have no doubt that in most of the misunderstandings which take place between the whites and Indians in the interior of the Indian country, the fault is with the white people, except among the Comanches, or Hietans, as some call them. They are a roving, plundering, murdering nation.

The following are the names of the different nations of Indians who inhabit the country between this and the Rocky mountains and west of the Mississippi, viz., Sauks, Foxes, Sioux, Otoes, Iowas, Mahas, Pawnees, Paducas, Snakes, Shoshones, Delawares, Peorias and Kickapoos, and there may be others that I have never heard of, or having heard of, have forgotten.

TRADE TO MEXICO.

The trade to Mexico from this country is carried on by individuals. Sometimes two, three, or more individuals will join their small adventures together, either at St. Louis or on the route, and sell them to the best advantage at Santa Fe or other places in Mexico, during the winter months. Those people who are inclined to go to Mexico, prepare by purchasing goods, wagons, mules, and horses and hiring of men. The whole cavalcade rendezvous at Independence, Jackson county, in this state, about the month of May. They then move off together after having formed such regulations among themselves as are deemed beneficial to the whole, which regulations continue in force on the whole route from this state to Santa Fe.

From what I can learn there is little or no danger between this and the supposed line dividing Mexico and the United States, unless the cavalcade fall in with a war party of Pawnees or Paducas on their way to war against the Comanches or Hietans (as some call them), and then if the party of whites have in number say 100 or 150 men, the Indians will not attack them, but will try every stratagem to steal their horses and mules, because those Indians know that when they have once got the horses and mules, the white people cannot get their wagons away, but will abandon them, whereby the Indians will get much booty. By this mode they have succeeded in more than one instance, and after carrying away what they can they destroy the balance both of the goods and wagons.

In May last upwards of two hundred men left Independence for Santa Fe and from what I am informed they did not meet with any difficulty either in going or returning. This was told me by a few who have returned. It appears that after the line above mentioned is crossed (in going outwards) the white people are more apt to fall in with the Hietans who follow the buffalo near the base of the mountains to the northward during the spring and summer months, and to the southward during the autumn.

Parties from this place on their arrival in the mountains, hide their goods and then they go into the settlements to make the necessary arrangements, after which, by means of bribes, their goods are smuggled in. They then sell them so as to be here again about this time (October) or ensuing month with the returns, whatever they may be. I cannot form any idea, neither can I gain any information as to the amount of goods taken, or the number of men employed, in the annual trade to Mexico, and I am equally uninformed as to the amount of returns from that place. In August last Mr. Charles Bent set out from St. Louis with a number of wagons loaded with goods for Santa Fe and drawn by oxen. His party consisted of from thirty to forty men, and if he succeeds with his ox wagons the oxen will answer the triple purpose: 1st, drawing the wagons; 2nd, the Indians will not steal them as they would horses and mules; and 3rdly, in cases of necessity part of the oxen will answer for provisions.

OBSERVATIONS RESPECTING OUR RELATIONS WITH THE INDIAN NATIONS.

It is lamentable indeed for any one who has the least knowledge of Indians to observe that not only those who visit this place, but also those who have never been at any of the military posts, should have so little respect for the American people. In March, 1818, when I was at the city of Washington, I had several long conversations with Mr. Calhoun (then Secretary of War) on Indian affairs. I told him that it must appear strange to many people to perceive that we, as Americans, speaking the same language with the British, whose manners and customs were the same, exceeding them perhaps in our Indian expenditures, and having all the Indians residing within our own territories, still had not the same influence over them that the British had. Therefore (said I) there must be a fault somewhere. To this Mr. Calhoun replied, that I ought not to point out an evil without showing a remedy for it. I answered by saying that we ought to follow the same policy (so far as possible) towards the Indians that the British pursued with such success. The British government have a well-regulated Indian Department. No person is eligible for an Indian agency under that government unless he can speak some one of the Indian languages; for it is natural to suppose that a man understands at least the general manners and customs of all Indians if he has been among them long enough to learn any one of their languages, and they (the British) have brought their Indian affairs to a perfect system. But our government appoints young men to Indian agencies, generally from the interior of the United States, who, in all probability, have never seen more than three or four Indians together in the course of their lives, and those Indians perhaps civilized. When the old chiefs and warriors hear of the arrival of their new father (as they term the new agent) they call at the agency to see him, but the agent does not know what to say or do to them and perhaps does not give them a pipe of tobacco, or even a good or bad word. The Indians then go away dissatisfied, and consequently in cases of this kind, everything depends on the interpreter. If the interpreter is an honest man he may teach the agent something in the course of years; but on the contrary, if he is a designing man, and wishes that no one should share his influence, he will keep the agent and the Indians in continual broils and quarrels, and nothing being rightly done, the public service must suffer. Instead of trying to heal the old sores that have existed for the last fifty or sixty years between the American people and the Indians, the breach is made wider and fuel is added to the flame. I have been told that a young man who was appointed an Indian agent on the Missouri river cut off the ears of a half-breed who resided among the Sioux Indians because, being in a state of intoxication, he made use of some extravagant language disrespectful of the American people. Another agent on the Mississippi turned out of the guard-house an innocent Indian to other Indians, his enemies, who shot him down and butchered him in a horrid manner, in the presence of an American garrison of soldiers. Another Indian agent also invited some chiefs to a council, when a number of their enemies arrived at the agency, organized themselves, descended the Mississippi river, attacked the chiefs and others who were invited, and on their way to the council, killed nine and wounded three out of sixteen persons. In my intercourse with the Indians for the last forty years I never found that coercive measures ever had any good effect with them, but that conciliatory measures always tended to produce every purpose required. I am, &^{c}.,

THOMAS FORSYTH.

The Honorable Lewis Cass,
Secretary of War, Washington City.

(Thomas Forsyth's Letter Book, 1822-33. Mss. Dept. State Historical Society of Wisconsin.)

GENERAL ASHLEY'S METHOD OF MOVING PARTIES THROUGH THE INDIAN COUNTRY.

In compliance with your request in relation to my manner of equipping and moving parties of men through the Indian country in the course of my general excursions to the Rocky mountains, I will observe that, as mules are much the best animals for packing heavy burthens, each man has charge of two of them for that purpose, and one horse to ride. The equipage of each horse or mule consists of two halters, one saddle, one saddle blanket, one bear skin for covering the pack or saddle, and one pack strap for the purpose of binding on the pack, and a bridle for the riding horse. One of the halters should be made light for common use, of beef hide, dressed soft; the other should be made of hide dressed in the same way, or tarred rope, sufficiently strong to hold the horse under any circumstances, and so constructed as to give pain to the jaws when drawn very tight. The rein of each halter should not be less than sixteen feet long. A stake made of tough, hard wood, about two inches in diameter, and two feet long, with an iron socket, pointed at one end to penetrate the earth, and at the other end a band of iron to prevent its splitting, should be provided, to be used when in the prairies, with the halter last described. This stake, when well set in the ground, will hold any horse.

In the organization of a party of, say from 60 to 80 men, four of the most confidential and experienced of the number are selected to aid in the command; the rest are divided in messes of eight or ten. A suitable man is also appointed at the head of each mess, whose duty it is to make known the wants of his mess, receive supplies for them, make distributions, watch over their conduct, enforce order, etc., etc.

The party thus organized, each man receives the horse and mules allotted to him, their equipage, and the packs which his mules are to carry; every article so disposed of is entered in a book kept for that purpose. When the party reaches the Indian country, great order and vigilance in the discharge of their duty are required of every man. A variety of circumstances confines our march very often to the borders of large water courses; when that is the case, it is found convenient and safe, when the ground will admit, to locate our camps (which are generally laid off in a square) so as to make the river form one line, and include as much ground in it as may be sufficient for the whole number of horses, allowing for each a range of thirty feet in diameter. On the arrival of the party at their camping ground, the position of each mess is pointed out, where their packs, saddles, etc., are taken off, and with them a breastwork immediately put up, to cover them from a night attack by Indians; the horses are then watered and delivered to the horse guard, who keep them on the best grass outside and near the encampment, where they graze until sunset; then each man brings his horse within the limits of the camp, exchanges the light halter for the other more substantial, sets his stakes, which are placed at the distance of thirty feet from each other, and secures his horses to them. This range of thirty feet, in addition to the grass the horse has collected outside the camp, will be all-sufficient for him during the night. After these regulations, the proceedings of the night are pretty much the same as are practiced in military camps. At day-light (when in dangerous parts of the country) two or more men are mounted on horseback, and sent to examine ravines, woods, hills, and other places within striking distance of the camp, where Indians might secrete themselves, before the men are allowed to leave their breastworks to make the necessary morning arrangements before marching. When these spies report favorably, the horses are then taken outside the camp, delivered to the horse guard, and allowed to graze until the party has breakfasted, and are ready for saddling. In the line of march, each mess march together, and take their choice of positions in the line according to their activity in making themselves ready to move, viz.: the mess first ready to march moves up in the rear of an officer, who marches in the front of the party, and takes choice of a position in the line, and so they all proceed until the line is formed; and in that way they march the whole of that day. Spies are sent several miles ahead to examine the country in the vicinity of the route, and others are kept at the distance of a half mile or more from the party, as the situation of the ground seems to require, in front, rear, and on the flanks. In making discoveries of Indians, they communicate the same by signal or otherwise to the commanding officer with the party, who makes his arrangements accordingly. In this way I have marched parties of men the whole way from St. Louis to the vicinity of the Grand lake, which is situated about one hundred and fifty miles down the waters of the Pacific ocean, in 78 days. In the month of March, 1827, I fitted out a party of 60 men, mounted a piece of artillery (a four pounder) on a carriage which was drawn by two mules; the party marched to or near the Grand Salt lake beyond the Rocky mountains, remained there one month, stopped on the way back fifteen days, and returned to Lexington, in the western part of Missouri, in September, where the party was met with everything necessary for another outfit, and did return (using the same horses and mules) to the mountains by the last of November, in the same year.

A FREE HUNTER'S BUSINESS ACCOUNTS.

The following seven exhibits, taken from many hundreds still among the Chouteau papers, will convey a good idea of the business transactions of the wilderness, and will show to what an extent the methods of business in the older and settled portions of the country obtained even in these remote sections where civilized man was yet almost an entire stranger. The particular person, whose accounts are here exhibited appears now and then in the narratives of that period and is believed to be the one for whom Gardiner river in the Yellowstone National Park is named.

COPY OF A FREE HUNTER'S CONTRACT.

Articles of agreement made and entered into at Fort Union, Upper Missouri, on the fifth day of July, one thousand eight hundred and thirty-two, by and between Kenneth Mackenzie, agent of the American Fur Company, and Johnson Gardner, citizen of the United States and free hunter in the Indian country——

The said Johnson Gardner hereby agrees to sell, and the said Kenneth Mackenzie agrees to purchase, all his stock of beaver skins now *en cache* on the Yellowstone river, at and for the price per pound net weight of four dollars twelve and a half cents, to be delivered by the said Johnson Gardner to the agent or servants of the said Kenneth Mackenzie on the spot where it is cached, the weight thereof to be regulated and adjusted by Francis A. Chardon and James A. Hamilton on its arrival at Fort Union, the number of skins being ....and the weight now considered to be..... The said Johnson Gardner further agrees to sell, and the said Kenneth Mackenzie agrees to purchase, all his stock of castorum at and for the price per pound of three dollars, the weight thereof to be adjusted by the parties aforesaid. The said Kenneth Mackenzie hereby further agrees to and with the said Johnson Gardner to furnish and supply and equip two men to hunt and trap beaver for the fall and spring seasons next ensuing, at the entire charge and cost of the said Kenneth Mackenzie, to hunt and trap under the direction of the said Johnson Gardner; and the said Kenneth Mackenzie further agrees to furnish a third man, and at his cost and charge to supply a moiety or one-half of the requisite, necessary and usual equipment for a beaver hunter, and the said Johnson Gardner hereby agrees to supply the said third man with the other moiety or half part of the needful equipment usual for a beaver hunter, and it is hereby agreed by and between the said Kenneth Mackenzie and the said Johnson Gardner that an entire moiety or half part of the beaver skins and castorum killed, taken and secured by the united skill and exertions of the said Johnson Gardner and the said three men to be furnished as aforesaid shall be the just and lawful share of the said Kenneth Mackenzie, the other moiety or half part to be the just and lawful share of the said Johnson Gardner, and it is further agreed that the said moiety or half part which shall become the property of the said Johnson Gardner shall be purchased of him by the said Kenneth Mackenzie at and for the price of three dollars fifty cents per pound for beaver skins taken and secured in the fall approaching, and four dollars per pound for beaver skins taken and secured in the spring following, and three dollars per pound for castorum. Signed, sealed and delivered by the said Kenneth Mackenzie and said Johnson Gardner at Fort Union the day and year first above written.

In the presence of
J. A. HAMILTON.

KENNETH MACKENZIE,
Agt. U. M. O.
his
JOHNSON X GARDNER.
mark

COPY OF AN ACCOUNT CURRENT BETWEEN JOHNSON GARDNER AND THE AMERICAN FUR COMPANY.

"Mr. Johnson Gardner in account with the American Fur Company, U. M. O.

DR.			CR.		
1830-1833.	To Sundries advanced as per account A. . .	$4,084.70	1831, July 12.	By 53 Beaver Skins at $6.50, . . .	$ 344.50
				" 1 Otter skin, .	2.50
			1832, July 21.	" 206 Beaver skins—273 lbs. at $4 ¼, ...	1,146.75
				" 1 Otter skin, .	2.00
				" 27½ lbs. Beaver skin (at Fort Cass) at 3 46-100	95.37
				" Note on Smith, Sublette & Co.	1,321.48
			1833, June 20.	" 16 Beaver Traps left at Fort Pierre, . . .	192.00
				" Balance carried down, . . .	980.10
		$4,084.70			$4,084.70
1833, June 20.	To balance, . . .	$980.10			

For Am. Fur Company,
J. Archdale Hamilton.
Fort Union, Sept. 12, 1833.

Copy of receipt for note referred to in above account current:

"$1371.48.

Received of Johnson Gardner a note on Messrs. Smith, Sublette, and Jackson for thirteen hundred and seventy-one dollars forty-eight cents, which he wishes me to collect for him and be placed to his credit at 5 per cent interest, which I will endeavor to do if no unavoidable accident will happen to me or the note.

(Signed) K. Mackenzie.

The above is a true copy of the receipt.
Witness: S. P. Winter."

Copy of weigh-bill of beaver mentioned in above account current.

"FORT UNION, August 6, 1832.

We, Francis A. Chardon and J. Archdale Hamilton, hereby certify that we have carefully weighed two hundred and six beaver skins purchased by the American Fur Company of Johnson Gardner and declare the weight thereof to be two hundred and seventy-eight pounds, as witness our hands the day and year first above written.

(Signed) F. A. CHARDON.
J. ARCHDALE HAMILTON."

Extract from Account "A" referred to in above account current.

"1832.				
June	28	Your share of advances to Tullock & Co.		$ 12 00
		Liquor 8.00, Feast 4.00	$ 12 00	
	29	Ditto 4.00	4 00	
	30	Shirts 8.00, Pantaloons 5.00	13 00	
		Liquor 11.00, Feast 2.00	13 00	
July	1	Ditto 6.00, Suit of clothes 70.00 . . .	76 00	
		Knives 4.00, Powder .75, Shoeing horse 3.00	7 75	
July	2	Tobacco .75, Cow skin 1.00	1 75	
	5	Liquor	3 00	
	6	Ditto	12 00	
	7	Ditto 10.00, Tea 2.00, Pork 2.00 . . .	14 00	
		Blanket 12.00, Vinegar 1.00, Axe 6.00 .	19 00	
		Sugar 1.00	1 00	
	8	Thread 1.00, Biscuit 8.50	9 50	
		Salt 6.00, Pepper 4.00, Handkfs 4.00 . .	14 00	
		Coffee 18.00, Tea 8.00, Sugar 24.00 . .	50 00	
		File 1.50, Tin Pans 2.00, Kettle 5.00 . .	8 50	
		Tin Cups 2.00, Knives 4.00, Awls 1.50 .	7 50	
		Tobacco 15.00, Sirsingles 6.00	21 00	
		Liquor 14.00	14 00	
	9	Rice 4.00, Knife 2.00, Liquor and Keg 27.00	33 00	$334 00
		Total		$346 00"

This amount seems to have been spent by Gardner while at Fort Union between spring and fall hunt. It is worth note that of this amount $109, or about one-third, is for liquor and feasting.

COPY OF GARDNER'S SHIPPING BILL.

"Shipped in good order per bull boat *Antoine* four pactons of beaver fur marked and weighing as follows:

No.	1	56	skins	weighing	73	lbs.	marked	J G
"	2	50	"	"	81	"	"	"
"	3	50	"	"	76	"	"	"
"	4	50	"	"	74	"	"	"
Total		206			304	N. B. 1 Otter Skin.		

Crossings of the Yellowstone,
July 18, 1832.

The above boat is bound for Fort Union."

COPY OF BILL FOR AN EQUIPMENT FOR FALL HUNT.

"Equipment for hunt, July 9th, 1832, viz.:

16	Traps 12.00	$192 00	
5	Horses 60.00	300 00	
1	Horse in January, 1833	60 00	
5	Saddles and apichemons	25 00	
8	Trap springs 16.00, Flints 1.00	17 00	
	Powder 9.00, Balls 12.00, File 1.50	22 50	
	Knives 7.50, Kettle 5.00, Axe 3.00	15 50	
	Wages of 3 men	750 00	$1382 00"

COPY OF A TRADER'S ENGAGEMENT.

"Before the subscribing witness personally appeared the undersigned Colin Campbell, who voluntarily binds and by these presents does engage himself to Pierre D. Papin, agent of Pratte, Chouteau & Co., for Sioux outfit on the following terms and conditions to say— The said Campbell engages himself to said Papin, agent for said Sioux outfit, for and during the term of two and a half years from the first of June one thousand eight hundred and thirty-nine.

"The said Papin, agent as aforesaid, for services faithfully rendered, promises to pay the said Campbell the sum of three thousand six hundred and sixteen dollars lawful money of the United States. The said Campbell on his part binds himself to serve, obey and execute with fidelity the orders or known wishes of his employers or any other persons entrusted with their business, to keep their secrets, make them acquainted with any thing which may come to his knowledge affecting their interest, and to do all such things as are usually done or ought to be done by a good and faithful clerk and trader.

In testimony whereof we have hereunto set our hand and seals this eighth day of November one thousand eight hundred and thirty-six.

C. Campbell, (Seal)"
[No signature.] (Seal)

Witness: Jacob Halsey.

F.

LIST OF TRADING POSTS.

List of trading posts in the country west of St. Louis during the period from 1807 to 1843, with a few belonging to the periods before and after, and also a few military posts—The total number of posts referred to in this list is about one hundred and forty.

MISSOURI RIVER POSTS.

Fort Orleans. This was the first fort ever built on the Missouri river. In 1720 the Spanish sent an expedition of two hundred men to the Missouri to destroy the tribe of the Missouris who were friendly to the French. Their plan was to join the Pawnees, who were at war with the Missouris. They unfortunately lost their way and came first to the latter tribe. Supposing them to be Pawnees, the Spanish unfolded their scheme directly to their intended victims. The astonished Missouris did not acquaint them with their mistake, but made instant preparations, took the Spaniards by surprise, and destroyed the entire party.

As a result of this expedition the Louisiana government ordered the erection of a fort on the Missouri. The work was entrusted to M. Bourgemont, who built *Fort Orleans*, in 1772, on an island in the Missouri, some two hundred and fifty miles above its mouth. The actual location was about five miles below the mouth of Grand river, opposite the old village of the Missouris. The fort was the scene of considerable activity for several years, and from it M. de Bourgemont made an important expedition to the country of the Paducas in 1724. There is a tradition that when Bourgemont left the fort a year or two later to go down to New Orleans, the Indians attacked it and massacred every inmate. De Margry says that "*en 1726 la Compagnie des Indes supprima cette poste.*"[1]

In the valley of the Osage river, and for the accommodation of the Osage Indians, there were several posts, but they are scarcely ever mentioned in the annals of the time. They played a quite insignificant part in the history of the trade. Among these may be mentioned Forts *Carondelet, Marais de Cygnes,* and *Pomme de Terre.*

Fort Osage, or *Fort Clark,* stood near the site of Sibley, Missouri, about forty miles below the mouth of the Kansas. General William Clark passed this point in 1808 with a troop of cavalry on his way to make a treaty with the Osages. He selected the site for a post on his return. Lewis and Clark, June 23, 1804, had noted it as a good site for a fort. The post was occupied off and on until 1827, but not continuously with a regular garrison. It was permanently abandoned on the founding of Fort Leavenworth. It was here that was located the only government trading factory west of the Mississippi. (See further, Part III., Chapter VI.)

Chouteau's Post, or the *Kansas Post.* This was first established by Francis G. Chouteau on an island three miles below the mouth of the Kansas river for the trade of the Kansas Indians. The great flood of 1826 washed it into the river, and Chouteau then went about ten miles up the Kansas river, where he would be safe from a similar calamity in the future, and built a post on the right bank of the river. It was maintained for many years.

French Fort. This post is noted by Lewis and Clark in 1804, and by Doctor James in 1819 as being in ruins. It was on the Kansas shore, opposite the upper end of Kickapoo Island, back on the bluffs and in rear of an old village of the

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[1] "There was a French post for some time on an island a few leagues in length over against the Missouris. The French settled in this fort at the east point [of the island] and called it Fort Orleans."—Du Pratz.

Kansas Indians. Whether built as a trading post or a military fort is unknown. Bogy in his history of Missouri says that "the French government had a regular post and officer at [near?] the mouth of the Kansas river."

Camp Martin was a name given to a winter cantonment of United States troops at Isle à la Vache during the winter of 1818-19. The troops were a part of the Yellowstone Expedition and were commanded by a Captain Martin.

Leavenworth Fort. For circumstances of early history of this post see Part III., Chapter VI.

Blacksnake Hills, a post established by Joseph Robidoux where the city of St. Joseph now stands. Audubon in 1843 uttered the following prediction concerning the situation: "I was delighted to see this truly beautiful site for a town or city, as will be, no doubt, some fifty years hence."

Nishnabotna. In 1819 Robidoux, Papin, Chouteau, and Berthold, trading with a capital of $12,000, had their principal establishment near the mouth of this stream. Name variously spelled.

•*Council Bluffs*. This name, though not specifically applied to any post, denoted a locality where many trading posts have been built. It was one of the most important points on the whole course of the Missouri and was resorted to by traders from the very commencement of the fur trade on the upper river. The meeting of the two great valleys, the Missouri and the Platte, which was in this vicinity, had something to do with the importance of the place. The particular situation always known in those early years as Council Bluffs was twenty-five miles above the modern city of that name, and on the opposite side of the river about where the little town of Calhoun is now located. On the 3rd of August, 1804, Lewis and Clark held a council there with the Oto and Missouri Indians and gave the name from this circumstance. In the course of the next fifty years there were probably not fewer than twenty posts established between this point and the mouth of the Platte, but all are now swallowed up in the great cities that have taken their places on both sides of the river. It is impossible now to recover the names of all, or the locations of some whose names are known. Even those which are best known it is difficult to locate precisely.

Crooks and McLellan's post in 1810 was on the west bank of the river a little above the mouth of Papillon creek and therefore near the later site of Bellevue. It was broken up in the spring of 1811 when its proprietors entered the service of the Pacific Fur Company.

Bellevue. This was an important place during most of the fur-trading era and promised at one time to be the progenitor of the future city which was bound to arise in that vicinity. The early history of Bellevue is exceedingly obscure. Some authorities say that Lisa built the first post there in 1805 and gave it its present name. This is a mistake. Crooks and McLellan seem to have been the first to locate near there. The next occupant was the Missouri Fur Company under Joshua Pilcher, who must have moved down there soon after Lisa's death. Fontenelle and Drips apparently bought Pilcher's post and established it in their own name, which it retained for many years. At a date between 1830 and 1840, which is not exactly known, the American Fur Company moved to Bellevue from Cabanne's post some distance above, and established a new post there under the management of P. A. Sarpy. The Indian agency of John Dougherty was also located near there at about the same time. The agency was at Côte à Quesnelle just above the American Fur Company post.

Fort Croghan, a military post of temporary character which stood a little above the present Union Pacific bridge in Omaha. When it was established is uncertain, but it was abandoned in the fall of 1843.

Cabanne's Post was located near the old site of Rockport, nine or ten miles (by land) above the Union Pacific bridge in Omaha and six or seven miles below Fort Calhoun. It was established between 1822 and 1826 for the American Fur Company by J. P. Cabanne, who remained in charge until 1833, when he had to leave the country on account of the Leclerc affair. Pilcher succeeded him, and the post was later moved down to Bellevue. The Columbia Fur Company also had a post near here which was absorbed by Cabanne's establishment in 1827.

Fort Lisa was located about a mile above Cabanne's post and five or six miles below old Council Bluffs. It was founded by Manuel Lisa as early as 1812 and it continued to be occupied as late as 1823. During this period it was the most important post on the Missouri river. It commanded the trade of the Omahas, Pawnees, Otoes, and other tribes.

Engineer Cantonment, "about half a mile above Fort Lisa, five miles below Council Bluffs, and three miles above the mouth of Boyer river" (James), was the winter encampment of Major Long's scientific party in 1819-20.

Camp Missouri was the winter encampment of the troops attached to the Yellowstone expedition of 1819-20. It was located at the old Council Bluffs and on or near its site was built the post which for several years after was known as *Fort Atkinson*. It was abandoned in the spring of 1827. The post formed a quadrangle with the usual bastions or block houses at two opposite corners.

Fort Calhoun is the name which has succeeded to that of Fort Atkinson in the history of this locality and survives in the name of a little village near by. How it came to be applied to this post is not very well understood.

Cruzatte's Post, an early trading establishment two miles above old Council Bluffs, built in 1802. (Lewis and Clark.)

Fort Charles was an old trading post which stood about six miles below the present Omadi, Nebraska. It was occupied in 1795-6 by a Mr. McKay. (Lewis and Clark.)

Pratte and Vasquez, in 1819, had a trading post at the Omaha village a considerable distance above Council Bluffs, possibly at the old village above Blackbird Hill nearly opposite the modern town of Onawa, Iowa. The exact location is nowhere stated.

Big Sioux Post, an American Fur Company post at one time maintained near the mouth of the Big Sioux river by one Laframboise.

Vermillion Post was an important trading post for the convenience of the lower Sioux tribes. It was located just below the mouth of the Vermillion river about on the present line between Clay and Union counties, South Dakota. Another Vermillion fort of earlier date and sometimes called

Dickson's Post stood on the north bank of the river about half way between the Vermillion and the James. The Columbia Fur Company also had a post there.

Rivière à Jacques. The Columbia and American Fur Companies had establishments at this point for the trade of the Yankton band of the Sioux.

Ponca Post was established for the trade of the Indians of this name. It was just below the mouth of the Niobrara. The Columbia Fur Company also had a post here.

Fort Mitchell. This post was established in 1833 by Narcisse Le Clerc and named for D. D. Mitchell. It was abandoned four years later, and for several years furnished excellent fuel for steamboats until the old palisades were all used up.

Handy's Post was situated on the west bank of the Missouri where Fort Randall later stood. Very little is known of its history.

Trudeau's House, also called Pawnee House, was an establishment occupied by one Trudeau in the years 1796-7. It was on the left bank of the river a little above and opposite the site where Fort Randall later stood.

Fort Recovery was located at the lower end of American or Cedar Island a mile below the modern city of Chamberlain, South Dakota. This post was established in 1822 by the Missouri Fur Company which then included the prominent traders, Pilcher, Charles Bent, Fontenelle, and Drips. It was also called Cedar fort and may have been first so named. This may have been the site of the old Missouri Fur Company post which burned in 1810 and the fact of its reëstablishment may have given it its name. Leavenworth in 1823 refers to it as a post "called by the Indian traders Fort Recovery and sometimes Cedar fort."

"*Fort Brasseaux*" was located in this vicinity, or possibly ten or twenty miles above. The only reference to it that has fallen under the author's notice is in a letter by Gen. Ashley dated at this post July 19, 1823, written to Major O'Fallon, Indian agent, in regard to the Aricara campaign then in progress.

Fort Lookout was a post of the Columbia Fur Company and must have been built as early as 1822. Near it was

Fort Kiowa, belonging to the American Fur Company and also built as early as 1822, or immediately after the Western Department went to St. Louis. The sites were so close together that early references confused the two more or less. They were situated on the right bank of the Missouri some ten miles above where Chamberlain, South Dakota, now stands. The journal of the Yellowstone expedition of 1825 says of the American Fur Company post: "Fort Kiowa consists of a range of log buildings containing four rooms, a log house and a storehouse forming a right angle, leaving a space of some thirty feet. At the south corner of the work is erected a block-house near which stands a smith's shop. At the north corner is erected a small wooden tower. The whole work is enclosed by cottonwood pickets. The sides or curtains of the work are 140 feet each." Referring to Fort Lookout in 1833, when it was used as an Indian agency, Maximilian says that it "is a square of about sixty paces surrounded by pickets twenty or thirty feet high [!] made of square trunks of trees placed close together." The buildings consisted of three block-houses.

Sublette and Campbell had a house near here in 1834.

Fort Defiance was built by Harvey, Primeau and Company about 1845-6. They were ex-clerks of the American

Fur Company, bold and energetic men, who had set up an opposition on their own account in *defiance* of the American Fur Company. The location is on the right bank of the Missouri about six miles above the upper end of the Great Bend, near the mouth of Medicine Creek. This was also called Fort Bouis from one of the firm.

Cedar Fort, or *Fort aux Cèdres,* is a name which was applied to at least two different posts on as many Cedar Islands in the Missouri river. Their history is confused and uncertain. We have noted one already. The oldest one was at one time known as

Loisell's Post and was probably the first trading establishment built in the Sioux country along the Missouri river. It was about thirty-five miles below Fort Pierre. Loisell was in possession in 1803-4. The post was 65 to 70 feet square, with the usual bastions. The pickets were about 14 feet high. There was a building inside 45 x 32 feet divided into four equal rooms. This was probably the real Fort aux Cèdres which is so known in the narratives of the times. Several authorities speak of it as an old Missouri Fur Company trading post, but if so it was possibly the one which burned in the spring of 1810, for no such post is mentioned by Bradbury or Brackenridge in 1811, or by Leavenworth in 1823.

Fort George, a post belonging to Fox, Livingston and Company, 21 miles below Fort Pierre, on the right bank of the Missouri. It was built by Ebbetts and Cutting, agents of the firm, in 1842. The post was probably not occupied more than three or four years, for Fox, Livingston and Company did not remain long in the country.

Teton River posts. The mouth of the Teton river (first called Little Missouri and now Bad river) was the most important locality in the Sioux country. At this point the Missouri river, after a long southerly course, turns abruptly east and continues in this direction for many miles, gradually bearing off to the southeast. This bend was nearest of any point on the river to the Black Hills and the upper Platte country. It therefore became a natural shipping point for all the region round about. The local situation was ideal. A fine bottom about a mile wide and six miles long lay along the right bank of the Missouri river immediately above the Teton. The treeless bluffs were so far back that hostile bands of Indians could not approach the fort unobserved. The bottoms were fertile and afforded a camping ground for Indians and grazing for stock.

Who built the first post here is not known, but very likely it was the original Missouri Fur Company. It is hardly probable that they would have overlooked so important a situation. The earliest definite record is that of

Fort Tecumseh, which stood two or three miles above the mouth of the Teton. It was the principal establishment of the Columbia Fur Company upon the Missouri and was probably established in 1822. It was turned over to the American Fur Company December 5, 1827, with an inventory of property amounting to $14,453. It retained its name for five years after this event and was managed by William Laidlaw, one of the old Columbia Fur Company men. In the course of time the river began to cut into the bottom where the fort stood and necessitated the rebuilding of it in a less exposed situation. The new site was 3 miles above the mouth of the Teton and back about a quarter of a mile from the Missouri. Work was begun in 1831 and a large part of the lumber was manufactured during the following winter. The erection was so far completed in the spring of 1832 that on the 15th of April Mr. Laidlaw and Mr. Halsey, the clerk, moved into it. Work was continued on it during the summer and the full change was not accomplished before the end of the season. On the occasion of the visit of the steamboat *Yellowstone* between May 31 and June 5, 1832, with Mr. Pierre Chouteau on board, the new post was christened

Fort Pierre, in honor of the distinguished visitor and representative of the house at St. Louis. The new post was 325 by 340 feet and contained about two and a half acres of ground. It was one of the finest on the river and was the most important establishment except Fort Union.

The Navy Yard or *Chantier* of Fort Pierre was located some distance above, probably near Chantier creek. It was here that boats and lumber for the post were manufactured.

Teton Post is a name which may be used to designate a post belonging to the firm of P. D. Papin & Co., which Maximilian calls the French Fur Company. The members of the company were Papin, the Cerre brothers and Honore Picotte. The post was probably built about 1828 or 1829. It stood just below the mouth of the Teton. The firm sold out to the American Fur Company and entered its service October 14, 1830, and the property was at once moved up to Fort Tecumseh.

Sublette and Campbell commenced erecting an opposition post a "little below old Fort Tecumseh" October 17, 1833. The post continued to do business only a year when it was sold to the American Fur Company.

Scattered through the Sioux country on both sides of the Missouri there were many subordinate posts or houses of the American Fur Company dependent upon Fort Pierre. There were no fewer than three in the valley of James river (Rivière à Jacques). There was one at the forks of the Cheyenne, another at its mouth, one at the Aricara villages and others on Cherry, White and Niobrara rivers, and among the Brulé, Ogallala and other bands of the Sioux. In fact wherever there was an inducement to trade these temporary houses were erected.

Old Fort George was below but near the mouth of the Cheyenne river. Nothing further is known of it.

Aricara Post. Manuel Lisa had a post in this vicinity, but its exact location or particular name is not known.

Fort Manuel was on the west bank of the river—just above latitude 46° N.

The *Mandan Villages* were another important locality and the site of several posts. The course of the river here changed from a general easterly direction to one nearly due south. It was the point nearest the Red river settlements, and was the home of the Mandan and Minnetaree Indians.

Fort Mandan, the first structure built here, was the winter quarters of Lewis and Clark in 1804-5. It stood on the left bank of the Missouri 7 or 8 miles below the mouth of Big Knife river and opposite, though a little above, the site where Fort Clark later stood.

Lisa's Fort was the next one built in this locality. It was situated on the right or south bank of the river some ten or twelve miles above the mouth of the Big Knife near where the names Emanuel Rock and Emanuel Creek now are. The post was abandoned upon the breaking out of the War of 1812, but was occupied by Pilcher in 1822 or 1823 under the name of *Fort Vanderburgh.*

Sublette and Campbell had a post in 1833 a little below this point.

Tilton's Fort was built by James Kipp in 1822 for the Columbia Fur Company. It was on the opposite side of the river from the Mandan villages and a little above the site of Fort Clark. Being driven from this position in 1823 by the Aricaras he crossed and established a house in the

Mandan Villages. In the winter of 1825-6 Kipp went to the mouth of

White Earth river, 140 miles above, and built a post for the Assiniboine trade. This post passed into the hands of the American Fur Company in 1827 with the rest of the Columbia Fur Company posts. In 1830 McKenzie ordered the erection of a new post for the Mandan trade and Kipp was put in charge of the work. It was built in the spring of 1831 and was named

Fort Clark, for General William Clark. It was on a bluff in an angle of the river and on its right bank, 55 miles above the N. P. R. R. bridge at Bismarck, N. D. The post was 132 by 147 feet, on the typical plan, and was a substantial structure. It ranked as one of the most important posts on the river.

The Mouth of the Yellowstone was the next important point above the Mandans and several posts sprang up here during the fur trade. It does not appear that the Missouri Fur Company ever established a post here, although it is not easy to understand why they did not. The first post was built by

Ashley and Henry in 1822 on the tongue of land between the two rivers about a mile above the junction and next to the Missouri. It was abandoned in the fall of 1823. In 1825 three sides of the stockade and a part of the buildings were still standing.

No other attempts were made to establish a post in this vicinity until 1828, when Kenneth McKenzie, then the leading partner in the "U. M. O." sent a party to the mouth of the Yellowstone to build a post. They probably commenced work about October 1 of that year. This post seems to have been named

Fort Floyd, while the name

Fort Union was applied to another post two hundred miles farther up. The name Union was, however, soon transferred to the mouth of the Yellowstone, and the advanced post was abandoned. Maximilian says that Union was begun in 1829.

There is some confusion in regard to the establishment of the important post of Fort Union, and to enable the reader to draw his own conclusions the correspondence of the American Fur Company relating to the subject will be reproduced here. McKenzie wrote to Chouteau from the Vermillion river October 2, 1828, that he had just returned with Indian Agent Sanford from the Mandans; that four days before he left, the keelboat *Otter* had left for the Yellowstone to establish a post for the Assiniboine trade. And in a letter from Fort Tecumseh December 26, 1828, he said: "The *Otter* arrived at the Yellowstone in sufficient time to build a fort and have all necessary preparations made for security." This establishes the fact that a post was built at the Yellowstone in 1828 and fixes October 1st as pretty close to the actual date of commencement.

In a letter written at Fort Tecumseh March 15. 1829, McKenzie says: "Your favor of the 5th of December reached me on the 25th ult., the date of my arrival from Fort Floyd near the Yellowstone"; and again in the same letter, "Old Glass came to Fort Floyd last fall." In a letter to W. B. Astor April 19, 1830, Pierre Chouteau, Jr., says: "A mon arrivée ici [St. Louis] le 16, j'ai trouvé des lettre de Mr. McKenzie du 28 December, 1829, et de 2 et 20 Janvier, 200 milles au dessus de la Roche Jaune. Les chasseurs des montagnes n'avaient pas aussi bien réussi dans la chasse d'automne qu'il espérait, mais il espérait un meilleur succés pour le printemps. Il est d'opinion qu'il fera beaucoup plus de robes cette année que de coutume; c'est à dire dans les trois posts d'en haut, chez les Mandans, à l'embouchure de la Roche Jaune, et Fort Union 200 milles audessus, et il dit que le pays du haut est très rich en castors et robes." Taken as they read these extracts mean that there were three posts on the upper river in 1829, the Mandan post, Fort Floyd and Fort Union 200 miles farther up.

The only clue to the origin of the name "Union" that has come to our notice is in a letter from McKenzie in which he discusses the trade situation and his desire to fix upon some point at which he can unite all the routes of trade. "Keeping in view a union at some convenient point above with the free hunters," he thought that he could control the trade both of the rivers and of the mountains.

Fort Union was the best built post on the Missouri, and with the possible exception of Bent's fort on the Arkansas, the best in the entire West. It was 240 by 220 feet, the shorter side facing the river, and was surrounded by a palisade of square hewn pickets about a foot thick and twenty feet high. The bastions were at the southwest and northeast corners, and consisted of square houses 24 feet on a side and 30 feet high, built entirely of stone and surmounted with pyramidal roofs. There were two stories; the lower one was pierced for cannon and the upper had a balcony for better observation. The usual banquette extended around the inner wall of the fort. The entrance was large and was secured with a powerful gate which in 1837 was changed to a double gate on account of the dangerous disposition of the Indians owing to the smallpox scourge. On the opposite side of the square from the entrance was the house of the bourgeois, a well-built, commodious two-story structure, with glass windows, fire-place and other "modern conveniences." Around the square were the barracks for the employes, the store houses, work shops, stables, a cut stone powder magazine capable of holding 50,000 pounds, and a reception room for the Indians. In the center of the court was a tall flag staff around which were the leathern tents of half-breeds in the service of the company. Near the flagstaff stood one or two cannon trained upon the entrance to the fort. Somewhere in the enclosure was the famous distillery of 1833-4. All of the buildings were of cottonwood lumber and every thing was of an unusually elaborate character. Nathaniel J. Wyeth, when he visited Union in 1833, declared that he had seen no British post that could compare with it.

Fort Union always had a large complement of clerks, artisans, and engagés about and was the most extensively equipped of any of the posts.

It had the honor of entertaining numerous distinguished visitors, among whom were Catlin in 1832, Maximilian in 1833, and Audubon in 1843. (For a very elaborate and detailed description of the fort see *Audubon and His Journals*, vol. II., p. 180.)

Fort William was a fort belonging to Sublette and Campbell and was named for the former. It was located on the left bank of the Missouri opposite the mouth of the Yellowstone and on the site where Fort Buford was afterwards built. It was commenced August 29, 1833, and was abandoned when Sublette sold out to the American Fur Company a year afterward.

Fort Mortimer was Fort William resurrected under a new firm, Fox, Livingston & Co., of New York. This event took place in 1842 and the post succumbed to the American Fur Company three years later.

Fort Assiniboine was a temporary post at a point some distance above Union where the steamer *Assiniboine* was caught by low water in the summer of 1834 and compelled to spend the winter. The intention probably was to make it an outpost of Union. It was 100 feet square and the buildings ranged round the interior were in all 134 feet long and 18 feet deep. The post was abandoned April 2, 1835, and Lamont, who was in charge, brought the property back to Union. It is not known how far above Union this post was located, but wherever it was it marks the first advance of steamboats beyond the mouth of the Yellowstone.

Fort Jackson was built by C. A. Chardon in December, 1833, at the mouth of Poplar river *(Rivière aux Trembles)*. Chardon had a force of twenty men with a strong equipment and built a post fifty feet square. The name was probably given for Andrew Jackson, for in a letter from this point Chardon says, " We are all Jackson men." McKenzie thus states the purpose of the establishment: "I consider it desirable to establish a wintering post west of this, partly for the convenience of the Indians who frequent that section, but principally with a view of compelling our opponents [Sublette and Campbell] to divide their forces, for the principle of divide and conquer has often been verified."

The next important point above the mouth of the Yellowstone was the Blackfoot country near the mouth of the Marias. Prior to 1831 no post had been successfully established in the country of these Indians. About October 1st of that year James Kipp commenced one on the left bank of the Missouri just above the Marias and called it

Fort Piegan in honor of the Piegan band of Blackfeet. The post was occupied only during the winter, when it was abandoned by Kipp, who went down the river with the returns. It was then burned by the Indians. In the spring of 1832 D. D. Mitchell went up the river and built a new post about six miles above the mouth of the Marias on the left bank of the river and called it ✓ *Fort McKenzie*. It stood 120 yards back from the river. It was 140 feet square and was built on the regular plan, but with an exceptionally strong gate provided with double doors.

In 1833 Alexander Culbertson selected a new site for a post on the right bank of the Missouri at the mouth of the Shonkin, but it does not appear that a post was actually built here.

Fort McKenzie was occupied as late as 1843, for there is extant a letter from William Laidlaw written at Fort Union December 5, 1843, in which the writer says that he has "lately heard from Mr. Chardon, who is in charge of Fort McKenzie at the Blackfeet;" and he adds that "the Blackfeet are getting more and more troublesome in consequence of certain retrenchments of liquor heretofore given them in their ceremonies, the discontinuation of which had become absolutely necessary for the better regulation of that post. They, however, are so much dissatisfied that Mr. Chardon says that he can not get out at the gate more than once a week." Tradition says that the hostile feeling of the Blackfeet was due to the wanton massacre of some of their number by Chardon and Harvey the winter before. In any event Chardon was compelled to move down stream into a different neighborhood and build a new fort. After he left, the Indians burned Fort McKenzie and the post was often referred to afterward as Fort Brulé. The site is known to this day as Brulé Bottom. (For a more complete description of this post see *Audubon and His Journals*, vol. II., p. 188; also the works of Maximilian, Prince of Wied.)

Fort Chardon was the name of the new post at the mouth of the Judith. It was probably built in the fall of 1843 — not before that. It was occupied only for a short time when Alexander Culbertson moved the establishment to a point on the right bank of the Missouri opposite Pablois Island, about 18 miles above where the Fort Benton bridge now crosses the river. This event probably took place in 1845, and the new post was called

Fort Lewis, in honor of the explorer, Captain Meriwether Lewis. The situation proving unfavorable to the trade, the post was torn down in 1846 and rebuilt in a more favorable location farther down stream and on the left bank. The name Lewis was retained for several years. In 1850 the post was rebuilt of adobe and was dedicated amid grand festivities on Christmas day of that year. At the same time it was rechristened by Mr. Culbertson

Fort Benton, in honor of Thomas H. Benton, who had so often rescued the company from disaster. This noted post, situated at the head of navigation on the Missouri river, belongs to a later period than that covered by this work.

The Three Forks of the Missouri. The Missouri Fur Company built a large post here early in the year 1810. According to Lieut. James H. Bradley, who visited the site of the post in 1870, and could still make out enough from the ruins to trace the general outline, "it was a double stockade of logs set three feet deep, enclosing an area of about three hundred feet square, situated upon the tongue of land (at that point only half a mile wide) between the Jefferson and Madison rivers, about two miles from their confluence, upon the south bank of the channel of the former stream called Jefferson slough." (*Transactions of the Montana Historical Society,* vol. II.) The site was at that time mostly washed away by the river and is believed to be now entirely gone. The post was abandoned in the fall of 1810 owing to the persistent attacks of the Blackfeet. An anvil was left behind and remained on the site for upwards of forty years afterward and may now be in the bed of the river. With the lapse of years and the partial oblivion which overtook those early events, tradition linked this post with the expedition of Lewis and Clark, and it was the popular belief that these explorers passed a winter there. The post came to be known locally as "Lewis and Clark's fort." The only relic of this post still in existence is a letter written on the spot in the spring of 1810. It is reproduced elsewhere in this work. (Appendix A.)

This completes the list of posts on the Missouri proper, but there were several important ones on the Yellowstone which were directly dependent upon Fort Union.

Braseau's Houses were on the left bank of the Yellowstone about 50 miles above the mouth. They were built by a well-known trader who flourished upon the upper river in the early years of the trade.

The Crow country was favored with numerous trading posts, the principal situation being at the mouth of the Bighorn river. The first post built here, and the first known to have been built above old Fort aux Cèdres on the Missouri was

Fort Manuel, Manuel's Fort, or Fort Lisa, built by Manuel Lisa in 1807. It was situated on the right bank of both rivers. In 1809 it passed into the hands of the Missouri Fur Company and was probably abandoned in the summer of 1811 when Henry came down the river after the abandonment of his post on the Snake.

Fort Benton was the second post built here, but whether upon the same site as Fort Manuel is uncertain. It was built by the Missouri Fur Company under Joshua Pilcher in 1822 and was abandoned in the following year.

Ashley and Henry built a post in this locality in the fall of 1823. It was abandoned probably in 1824.

Fort Cass. This was the first American Fur Company post in the Crow country. Its establishment is duly referred to in the American Fur Company correspondence. The following extracts from Wyeth's Journal of August 17 and 18, 1833, give the essential facts relating to it: "About 3 miles below the mouth of the Bighorn we found Fort Cass"; it "is situated on the east [right] bank of the Yellowstone river, is about 130 feet square, made of sapling cottonwood pickets with two bastions at the extreme corners, and was erected in the fall of 1832." It was built by Samuel Tulloch and was often known as Tulloch's fort. It was abandoned in 1835.

Fort Van Buren was the second American Fur Company post on the Yellowstone. It was built in the fall of 1835 and named for the Vice President of the United States and was abandoned in 1843. It was on the right bank of the Yellowstone near the mouth of Tongue river.

Fort Alexander, the third Crow post of the American Fur Company, was built as early as 1839. Larpenteur says that it was built by himself in 1842, but it is mentioned in the company's license for 1839. The post was on the left bank of the Yellowstone opposite the mouth of the Rosebud. It was abandoned in 1850.

Fort Sarpy was the last of the Crow posts of the American Fur Company and was not built until after 1843. Its date was 1850; its name was for John B. Sarpy; it stood on the right bank of the Yellowstone about twenty-five miles below the mouth of the Bighorn, and it was abandoned between September, 1859, and September, 1860. The post was 100 feet square, with pickets 15 feet high, but no flanking arrangements.

Fox, Livingston & Company built a post, probably in 1843, on the Bighorn river at the mouth of the Little Bighorn. It was soon abandoned.

There were many posts in the Missouri valley whose location is not known. Forts Volcano, Lucien and Madison are of the number, the last being in the vicinity of the Mandans.

In the letter books of the American Fur Company may still be seen applications for licenses to trade on the upper river, and from these we may form some idea of the development and gradual decline of its trade.

The posts received from the Columbia Fur Company in 1827 were Council Bluffs, Vermillion, Rivière à Jacques, Ponca, Tecumseh, and the Mandans.

In 1831 the "U. M. O." licenses were for Vermillion, Rivière à Jacques, Ponca, Lookout, Forks White river, Tecumseh, Hollowood on Teton, Mouth Cheyenne, Little Cheyenne, Aricara villages, Heart river, Mandans, Mouth Yellowstone, Mouth Marias. It will be noted that Union, Clark, and Piegan are not yet mentioned by name. Fort Cass was first mentioned in 1833.

In 1839 the list included Vermillion, Sioux, Lucien, Pierre, John, Clark, Union, Alexander, Van Buren and McKenzie. The name Lucien has not elsewhere come to our notice. It was doubtless given in honor of Lucien Fontenelle to some post ordinarily mentioned by locality only. Fort John was the post on the Laramie to be described farther on.

In 1851 the company maintained Vermillion, John, Pierre, Clark, Berthold, Union, Alexander, and Benton.

In 1859 there were Pierre, Clark, Berthold, Union, Sarpy, and Benton.

CIS-MONTANE POSTS.

Under this heading will be considered those posts along the eastern base of the Rocky mountains which were not immediately dependent upon the Missouri river as their line of communication with St. Louis.

The *Portuguese Houses* stood very near the junction of the North and South Forks of Powder river, near where the military post of Fort Reno later stood. All we know of them is from the following extract from the report of Captain W. F. Raynolds, who explored the country around the sources of the Yellowstone in 1859 and 1860, and visited the site of these houses on the 26th of September, 1859. "After a ride of about 15 miles we came to the ruins of some old trading posts, known as the 'Portuguese houses,' from the fact that many years ago they were erected by a Portuguese trader named Antonio Matéo. They are now badly dilapidated, and only one side of the pickets remains standing. These, however, are of hewn logs, and from their character it is evident that the structures were originally very strongly built. Bridger recounted a tradition that at one time this post was besieged by the Sioux for forty days, resisting successfully to the last alike the strength and the ingenuity of their assaults, and the appearance of the ruins renders the story not only credible but probable."

Fort William, named for William L. Sublette, was the first trading establishment ever built at what later became an important situation—the confluence of the North Platte and Laramie rivers. The work was begun with 13 men about June 1, 1834. (Wyeth.) "William L. Sublette has built such a fort as Fort Clark (Mandans) on Laramie Fork of the river Platte and can make it a central place for the *Sioux* and *Cheyenne* trade." (Fontenelle, Sept. 17, 1834.) "Fort Laramie was built in 1835 [1834] by Robert Campbell and was called Fort William." (Wislizenus, 1839.) The post was located on the left bank of the Laramie about a mile above its mouth. Sublette sold it to Fitzpatrick, Sublette and Bridger in 1835, and these gentlemen entered into relations with Fontenelle the same year, thus virtually turning the post over to the American Fur Company. The post was then, or soon after, rechristened

Fort John, for Mr. John B. Sarpy. Its early history is exceedingly obscure. In 1839 it was noted by Wislizenus as being rectangular in shape, 80 by 100 feet, surrounded by a palisade of cottonwood pickets 15 feet high, with flanking towers on three sides and a very strong gate. At this time the name Laramie was coming into popular use and gradually replaced "Fort John" in common usage, but the latter name alone was used in the business transactions of the American Fur Company.

Before 1846 another post was built about a mile farther up stream and to this the name

Fort Laramie was given. Fort John is said to have been demolished soon after. About 1849 the American Fur Company sold out to the government and moved some distance down the river. The famous military post of Fort Laramie then began its career and was for many years a principal base of operations against the hostile Indians.

Fort Platte was situated on the right bank of the Platte in the tongue of land between the Platte and the Laramie and about three-fourths of a mile above the junction. It was built about 1840, for it receives no notice from Wislizenus in 1839, but was visited by Sage in 1841. Fremont in 1842 noted it as belonging to Sybille Adams & Company, but in 1843 it belonged to Pratte, Cabanne & Company. It probably lasted only a few years.

La Bonté was a temporary trading house on the Platte at the mouth of La Bonté creek. It was in operation in 1841.

In the valley of the South Platte, some thirty or forty miles below where Denver now stands, were several trading establishments whose history it is impossible to make out satisfactorily.

Fort Lupton stood on the right bank of the river about ten miles above the mouth of the St. Vrain. It was an adobe structure, the ruins of which are still visible.

Fort Lancaster was noted by Fremont in 1843 as being "the trading establishment of Mr. Lupton" and was apparently identical with Fort Lupton.

Fort St. Vrain was also on the right bank of the river and about opposite the mouth of the St. Vrain. It belonged to Bent and St. Vrain. This post was also known as

Fort George, and was in charge of Marcellus St. Vrain in 1841.

Between Lupton and St. Vrain there were two other posts at some indefinite time before 1842. Sage noted them in that year and Fremont two years later, and both speak of one of them as having been abandoned for a long time and the other as only recently abandoned. It appears that the lower of these two posts, which was about six miles above Fort St. Vrain, belonged to two traders by the names of

Locke and Randolph. They failed in their enterprise and abandoned their post in May, 1842.

The other post belonged to

Vasquez and Sublette. It was occupied in 1839 when Wislizenus passed it.

The valley of the Arkansas below the mountains was always an important one in the fur trade, and there were many posts or houses, mostly of a temporary character, located here. The first habitation ever built here, so far as we have any knowledge, dates from some time prior to 1763, when a trader visited the Arkansas and built a temporary fort on its upper course near the foot of the mountains. The fact is recorded by Amos Stoddard in his *Sketches of Louisiana*.

In 1806 Lieutenant Pike built a small temporary redoubt on the south bank of the Arkansas, a little above the mouth of Fountain creek.

In all probability Chouteau and De Munn had a temporary house in this locality during their three years' stay there in 1815-17, but there is no record of it.

In the winter of 1821-2 Jacob Fowler built a log house on the modern site of Pueblo, Colorado, and occupied it for upwards of a month.

Gant and Blackwell built a post on the upper Arkansas, about six miles above Fountain creek, in 1832. Captain Gant is said to have been the first hunter to form friendly relations with the Arapahoes.

In 1842 a trading post was built at the mouth of Fountain creek. James P. Beckwourth claims that it was built under his direction in October of that year. Sage confirms the date of 1842, but simply says that it was built by "independent traders." He adds that it was called the "Pueblo." Other authorities mention George Simpson and his associates as builders of the post. By whomever built, the date seems clearly to have been 1842.

Wislizenus in 1839 found a small post called *Fort Pueblo* four miles above Bent's fort, "inhabited principally by Mexicans and Frenchmen." Farnham mentions the same post and calls it El Pueblo. He locates it five miles above Bent's fort on the north bank of the river.

There were in 1843 two posts in this locality, one on American soil and one on Mexican, from which smuggling operations, particularly in liquor, were carried on extensively from Santa Fe to the trading posts farther north.

From these obscure and unsatisfactory references it is clear that there were, all through the period of the fur trade, small and transient trading houses in the valley of the Arkansas from Bent's fort to the mountains. None of them amounted to anything of note. The one post of importance in this entire section was the celebrated

Bent's Fort, or *Fort William,* which stood on the left bank of the river about half way between the present towns of La Junta and Las Animas, Colorado. The Bent brothers first built a stockade near the mouth of Fountain creek, but afterward moved down stream where they would be more in line with the trade between the United States and Taos on the mountain branch of the Santa Fe Trail. The fort was thus in touch with the trade of Santa Fe and that of the mountains. It was founded in 1829 and became a very important post. It was 150 by 100 feet in size, the longer sides extending north and south. The walls were adobe, about six feet thick at the base and 17 feet high. The entrance was through a large gate on the east side. At the northwest and southwest corners were cylindrical bastions or towers ten feet inside diameter and 30 feet high, loopholed for musketry and cannon. The interior was divided into two parts, one of which was devoted to the buildings and the other to corrals, wagon sheds and material and stock generally. The buildings had clay floors and gravel roofs. In 1839 the fort had in its employ from 80 to 100 men. It was in full operation in 1843. In 1852 it was destroyed by Colonel William Bent, for whom it had received its name, Fort William.

Glenn's Post was a temporary trading house in the Osage country on the Verdigris river about a mile above its mouth. It was built by Hugh Glenn and was apparently abandoned in 1821, when Glenn joined Jacob Fowler in an expedition to Sante Fe.

TRA-MONTANE POSTS.

On the western side of the Continental Divide there were few American posts, and fewer still of any permanence or importance.

Robidoux's Post on the Gunnison stood on the left bank of that stream a short distance below the mouth of the Uncompahgre river.

Fort Uintah, built by the same Robidoux who built the post on the Gunnison, stood on the banks of the Uintah river some distance above the mouth of the Du Chesne and in the foot hills of the Uintah mountains. These were early posts although the dates of their establishment are not known. Robidoux was in the country as early as 1825. Fremont, who passed Fort Uintah in June, 1844, records that the fort was attacked shortly afterward by the Utah Indians and all its garrison massacred except Robidoux, who happened to be absent. If this is a correct report, it is the only instance of a successful attack by the Indians upon a trading post of the West.

Fraeb's Post, built by Henry Fraeb and James Bridger, stood on St. Vrain's fork of Elkhead river, itself a branch of Yampah river, Colorado. Fraeb was killed in the latter part of August, 1841, in a battle between his own party of sixty men and a war party of Sioux. The whites lost five men and the Indians ten. The post was probably abandoned soon after.

Fort Davy Crockett was an inferior trading post located in the beautiful valley of Brown's Hole on Green river and stood upon the left bank of the stream. Very little is known of it. As seen by Wislizenus in 1839 it was a low one-story building with three wings and was built of lumber and adobe. It was not surrounded with pickets. According to Farnham, who also saw it in 1839, it was a "hollow square of one story log cabins with roofs and floors of mud, constructed in the same manner as those of Fort William," on the Arkansas. It belonged at this time to three Americans by the names of Thompson, Craig and St. Clair. In the closing years of the fur trade, just before the founding of Fort Bridger, it was a favorite rendezvous and wintering ground for the free trappers. The situation, however, despite the sublime natural environment, was wretched in the extreme, and the post was familiarly known among the trappers as "Fort de Misère."

Fort Bridger, which stood in the beautiful valley of Black's Fork of Green river, was one of the famous posts of the West. Its history, however, belongs to the emigration period and it was founded in the very year which has been designated as the dividing line between this period and that of the fur trade. It has the further distinction of being founded by one of the most noted characters which either period produced. Fortunately we have the founder's own account of the establishment of the post (Letter from James Bridger to Pierre Chouteau, Jr., Dec. 10, 1843). It is as follows: "I have established a small fort with a blacksmith shop and a supply of iron in the road of the emigrants on Black's Fork of Green river which promises fairly. They, in coming out, are generally well supplied with money, but by the time they get there are in want of all kinds of supplies. Horses, provisions, smith work, etc., bring ready cash from them, and should I receive the goods hereby ordered will do a considerable business in that way with them. The same establishment trades with the Indians in the neighborhood, who have mostly a good number of beaver among them."

There is no more important landmark in the history of the West than the event thus described.

Fort Bonneville or *Bonneville's Fort* are names applied to a rude stockade which Captain Bonneville built on the right bank of Green river, five miles above the mouth of Horse creek, early in August, 1832. Though apparently commenced with a view of making it a trading post it was abandoned as soon as built and was never of any consequence whatever in the trade. The trappers called it "Fort Nonsense," or "Bonneville's Folly."

We are fortunate in having a detailed description of this establishment from the pen of one who saw it during construction and the year following. It is from *Life in the Rocky Mountains*, by W. A. Ferris: "This establishment was doubtless intended for a permanent trading post by its projector, who has, however, since changed his mind and quite abandoned it. From the circumstances of a great deal of labor having been expended in its construction, and the works shortly after their completion deserted, it is frequently called 'Fort Nonsense.' It is situated in a fine open plain, on a rising spot of ground, about three hundred yards from Green river on the west side, commanding a view of the plains for several miles up and down that stream. On the opposite side of the fort, about two miles distant, there is a fine willowed creek, called Horse creek, flowing parallel with Green river, and emptying into it about five miles below the fortification. The view from the fort in one direction is terminated by a bold hill rising to a height of several hundred feet on the opposite side of the creek, and extending in a line parallel with it. Again on the east side of the river, an abrupt bank appears rising from the water's edge, and extends several miles above and below, till the hills, jutting in on the opposite side of the river, finally conceal it from sight. The fort presents a square enclosure, surrounded by posts or pickets of a foot or more in diameter firmly set in the ground close to each other and about fifteen feet in length. At two of the corners diagonally opposite to each other block houses of unhewn logs are so constructed and situated as to defend the square outside of the pickets and hinder the approach of an enemy from any quarter. The prairie in the vicinity of the fort is covered with fine grass, and the whole together seems well calculated for the security both of men and horses."

Ashley's Fort was a temporary trading house, said to have been built in 1825, on the west shore of Utah Lake near where Provo, Utah, now stands. It was to this point that Ashley is supposed to have hauled his wheeled cannon in 1826.

Fort Hall was built by Nathaniel J. Wyeth in the year 1834 on the left bank of the Snake river, a little above the mouth of the Portneuf. The circumstances of its founding have been fully outlined in the chapters on Wyeth's enterprise in Part II. of this work. Its history as a trading post is almost entirely associated with the Hudson Bay Company, to whom Wyeth sold it in 1836. It was an exceedingly important point during the emigration period, and later became a military post of considerable note.

Fort Henry was built by Andrew Henry in the fall of 1810 on Henry Fork of Snake river, near the mouth of the Teton, and probably near where the village of Egin, Idaho, now stands. It was abandoned by Henry in the spring of 1811, and was occupied for ten days by Hunt and the overland Astorians in October of that year. Nothing is known of it after this time. It consisted only of two or three log houses.

Camp Defiance "on the supposed waters of the Bonaventura" is the description of a trading locality mentioned by William L. Sublette in his application for a trading license for the year 1832.

Astoria was the Pacific Fur Company post on the Columbia river. For its history see the chapters on Astoria, Part II.

Fort William was a post established by Nathaniel J. Wyeth on the upper end of Wappatoo Island, at the mouth of the Willamette river, in the winter of 1834-5. It was occupied only for a short time. See chapter on Wyeth's enterprise, Part II.

This list will not describe the Hudson Bay Company posts which were located within what is now United States territory, for the reason that their history, except as related to the Astorian enterprise, is not a part of this work. There were nine of these posts besides Fort Hall—Vancouver, Nisqually, Simcoe, Walla Walla, Okanagan, Spokane, Flathead, Owen, Boisé, and possibly one or two others. Of these Okanagan, Spokane, and the Flathead post were founded by the Astorians.

G.

THE FORT TECUMSEH AND PIERRE JOURNAL.

Below are some extracts from the daily journal kept at Fort Tecumseh and its successor, Fort Pierre, which give as clear a picture as can now be had of the kind of life led at a fur trading post of the better class. The year is 1832.

"Saturday, [March] 3rd. Fair, pleasant weather. Mr. Laidlaw and the Indians went out to surround [hunt buffalo]. They returned at 1 P. M., having killed meat enough to load their horses.

"Sunday, 4th. Moderate and cloudy with rain at intervals. Gabriel V. Fipe and five Indians arrived from White river post with seven horses and mules and two hundred buffalo tongues. . . .

"Wednesday, 7th. Weather continues the same as yesterday. Several Indians of Gens de Poches band arrived on a begging visit. The Blackfeet Indians [Sioux band] who arrived yesterday left us today. One of them stole a kettle; we fortunately missed it before the fellow had proceeded far. Mr. Laidlaw and some Indians went out after them and succeeded in recovering the kettle. The Gens de Poches, who arrived today, say that Baptiste Dorion has been lately killed by a Sawon Indian; but we have reason to suppose the story to be fictitious. . . .

"Friday, 9th. A continuation of fair, pleasant weather. Five more lodges Yanctons arrived and camped. There is now about three feet of water on top of the Missouri ice. Two men arrived from Cedar island. They were obliged to leave their plank [for new fort] and trains on the way—the ice being so bad that they could not travel on it. . . .

"Tuesday, 13th. Still continue strong gales from the north and colder, but the weather is now clear and the Indians are crossing on the ice in great numbers with robes to trade (Gens de Poches). . . .

"Friday, 16th. Strong north winds, cold and cloudy, with snow at intervals. Baptiste Defond arrived last evening from the Sawon post with horses and mules. . . .

"Sunday, 18th. Moderate and clear. Two Indians arrived from White river post with a letter from Mr. Papin, the commandant.

"Monday, 19th. Mild and clear throughout the day. Nothing new. Finished duplicate ledger.

"Tuesday, 20th. Still mild and pleasant weather. Employes making packs and pressing them. . . .

"Friday, 23rd. Still continues fine weather. Most of the lodges left us today. They have gone up the Little Missouri [Teton]. The Missouri ice broke up at this place today. . . .

"Wednesday, 28th. Same weather as yesterday. Ice still drifting a little. Missouri four feet above low water mark. Mr. Picotte and a voyageur arrived from the Navy Yard in a canoe. . . .

"Friday, 30th. Fine weather. Ice commenced drifting at 9 P. M., and the water rose about four feet from sunrise to sunset. In the morning Baptiste Defond departed down stream to meet the steamboat *Yellowstone*. . . .

"Tuesday [April], 3rd. Moderate and pleasant. Missouri still rising. It is now eight and one-half feet above low water mark. Last evening J. Jewett arrived here from the Ogallala post with horses and mules, in all sixteen.

"Wednesday, 4th. A continuation of fine, pleasant weather.

"Thursday, 5th. Same weather as yesterday. Messrs. Laidlaw and Halsey moved up with their baggage to the new fort [Pierre].

"Friday, 6th. Still fine and pleasant. Hands employed variously. Two men arrived from the Yankton post with three horses. They report the arrival of Mr. P. D. Papin at the mouth of the White river with two skin canoes laden with buffalo robes.

"Saturday, 7th. Mr. William Dickson arrived from Rivière au Jacques with twelve packs furs.

"Sunday, 8th. Two men arrived from the Navy Yard with the news that the Indians have stolen all the company's horses at that place.

"Monday, 9th. Clear and moderate with north wind. Missouri falling fast. On the 6th inst. the water was so high that the old fort was nearly surrounded with water. Employed variously hauling property from the old fort, etc., etc. At 11 A. M. five skin canoes loaded with buffalo robes under charge of Colin Campbell arrived from the Ogallala post on Cheyenne river. They bring news of the murder of François Querrel by Frederick Laboue, the company's trader at Cherry river. Laboue arrived in the canoes. . . .

"Wednesday, 11th. Moderate north winds and pleasant. Several Sawons arrived last evening. The Missouri rising. . . .

"Friday, 13th. Strong northerly winds and pleasant. Mr. Dickson left for Rivière au Jacques. . . .

"Friday, 20th. We had a shower of rain in the morning. At 10 A. M. it cleared off. Hands employed variously. At 3 P. M. four men arrived from the Navy Yard. Buffalo in sight from the houses. Mr. Laidlaw and some Indians went out and they returned at 4 P. M., having killed four cows.

"Saturday, 21st. Calm and cloudy. Sent off Campbell and twenty-two men to Cherry river to bring down the peltries at that place.

"Sunday, 22nd. Clear and moderate winds from the northwest.

"Monday, 23rd. Fair, pleasant weather.

"Tuesday, 24th. Same weather as yesterday.

"Wednesday, 25th. A continuation of fine, pleasant weather. Nothing new.

"Thursday, 26th. Still fine, pleasant weather.

"Friday, 27th. Weather same as yesterday. At five o'clock P. M. Messrs. McKenzie, Kipp, and Bird with nine Blackfeet [Sihasapa] Indians arrived in a bateau from Fort Union. McKenzie brought down one hundred and eleven packs of beaver skins. . . .

"Wednesday, [May] 2nd. Cloudy with rain at intervals. Mr. Cerre arrived yesterday from the Yanctonnais with ninety odd packs robes. Hands employed making and pressing them.

"Thursday, 3rd. Clear and pleasant. Nothing new. Hands employed pressing packs, etc., etc. The Indians are now coming in every day to trade.

"Friday, 4th. Moderate and clear. Mr. Bird and the Indians returned from the Sawon camp. . . .

"Monday, 7th. Moderate winds and disagreeable rainy weather. Colin Campbell, with eleven skin canoes laden with buffalo robes, arrived from Cherry river. Mr. Campbell, while at Cherry river, disinterred the body of the deceased F. Querrel; and, as seven wounds were found in the body, Frederick Laboue was put in irons immediately on the arrival of the canoes. . . .

"Friday, 11th. Fair, pleasant weather. Sent off two men to the Rees with goods for the trade of those Indians. Pierre Ortubize and two men left in a skiff in search of the steamboat. Hands employed in making and pressing packs. . . .

"Monday, 14th. Clear and pleasant. Crossed sixty-four horses to the other side of the Missouri. At 4 P. M. had a thunder shower. Indians coming in from every quarter to trade. . . .

"Thursday, 17th. Clear and fine. Employed crossing horses for Fort Union, etc., etc. . . .

"Saturday, 19th. Still continues clear and pleasant weather. But no news of consequence. At 4 P. M. two men arrived. Halsey's child was born. . . .

"Monday, 21st. Clear and pleasant. Sent off twenty men to the Navy Yard to cut timber and bring it down on rafts.

"Tuesday, 22nd. Fine, pleasant weather. Mr. Fontenelle, with twenty men and a number of horses, arrived here from St. Louis. They bring news of the steamboat *Yellowstone*. She is now between this place and the Poncas.

"Wednesday, 23rd. Cloudy with rain at intervals. Eighteen men arrived from steamboat *Yellowstone*. She is stopped for want of water about sixty miles below White river. William Dickson and family arrived from Rivière au Jacques. . . .

"Friday, 25th. Clear and fine. Baptiste Defond arrived from the steamboat at the Big Bend. Messrs. McKenzie, Fontenelle, and others left here in a keelboat to meet her. . . .

"Thursday, 31st. Same weather as yesterday. Missouri still rising. Four men arrived from White River post with horses, robes, etc. Steamboat *Yellowstone* arrived at 5 P. M. . . .

"Tuesday, [June] 5th. Fine and pleasant weather. Steamboat *Yellowstone* left here for Ft. Union. Water falling.

"Wednesday, 6th. Fine and pleasant weather. Mr. Fontenelle left here with forty odd men for Ft. Union and one hundred and ten or fifteen horses. Water rising. . . .

"Monday, 11th. Fine weather with south winds. Keelboat *Flora* left here for Fort Union with a cargo of merchandise, etc. Keelboat *Male Twin* left here for the Navy Yard to bring down timber.

"Friday, 15th. Hot and sultry the first part of the day. Keelboat *Male Twin* arrived from the Navy Yard. Latter part of the day we had a fine, refreshing shower. I forgot to say that four bateaux also arrived from the Navy Yard today. They, as well as the *Male Twin*, were loaded with pickets for the fort. . . .

"Sunday, 17th. Keelboat *Male Twin* and four bateaux conducted by Mr. Honore Picotte left here for St. Louis loaded with 1,410 packs buffalo robes.

"Wednesday, 20th. Fine, pleasant weather with moderate southerly winds. The Missouri still rising. It is now nearly over the bank. Joseph Jewett, who left here on the 10th, arrived today from the Ogallalas with dry meat, lodges, etc. 480 lbs. dry meat was left here in the spring, but the wolves broke into the house and ate it all except about 20 pieces. . . .

"Sunday, 24th. Steamboat *Yellowstone* arrived from Ft. Union. Sent down 600 packs robes on board of her.

"Monday, 25th. Steamboat *Yellowstone* left us for St. Louis with a cargo of 1,300 packs robes and beaver. Mr. Laidlaw went on board. He is to go down as far as Sioux agency and return by land. Ortubize has got a keg of whiskey and is continually drunk himself and he tries to make as many of the men drunk as will drink with him. . . .

"Sunday, [July] 1st. Messrs. Laidlaw and Dickson left us for Lac Traverse in quest of some Canadian Pork Eaters expected here this summer. Castorigi sick and off duty. . . .

"Sunday, 8th. Same weather as yesterday, with the exception of a light shower in the morning. At 2 P. M. Messrs. Brown, Durand, and two Americans (all beaver trappers) arrived with about a pack of beaver.

"Monday, 9th. Fine weather; at 6 A. M. Henry Hart arrived from Ft. Union with three bateaux loaded with robes, etc. Loaded one boat with 120 packs beaver and other skins and put on board of another 30 packs of robes. She is to take on 120 or 130 packs at Yancton post.

"Tuesday, 10th. Strong gales from the north. Four bateaux ready to start for St. Louis, but they were detained here all day by the wind.

"Wednesday, 11th. Four bateaux laden with 355 packs buffalo robes and 10,230 lbs. beaver skins left here for St. Louis. They will take in 120 or 130 packs robes at Yancton post. Water rising fast. It is now five feet above low water mark. . . .

"Thursday, 19th. Jewett and Ortubize returned from hunting, having killed two bulls. On their arrival on this side of the river, we discovered two more bulls on the opposite side, when we immediately recrossed them. At night they returned, having killed one more bull.

"Friday, 20th. Cloudy, and hot, sultry weather. Vasseau and two men belonging to Le Clerc Company arrived at the mouth of Teton river for the purpose of building and establishing a trading house there. Leclaire and a few men arrived here from Fort Lookout. . . .

"Sunday, 29th. Pleasant weather and light northerly winds. At 10 A. M., Mr. Laidlaw arrived on the other side from the east with 36 Pork Eaters. He lost two on the road. Employed the greatest part of the day crossing the men and their baggage. At 12 M. Cardinal Grant arrived from the Yancton post. . . .

"Thursday, August 2nd. Calm and pleasant. Plenty of buffalo. Mr. Laidlaw went out to hunt them and killed three. . . .

"Saturday, 4th. Four Brulé Indians arrived in search of a trader. They are encamped five days' march from this. . . .

"Monday, 6th. Baptiste Dorion, Charles Primeau, and Hipolite Neissel left here this morning with four Indians, who arrived on the 4th with Mdse., to trade meat, etc., etc. Sent up Ortubize to the Navy Yard (or shanty) [Chantier] to hunt for our men at work there. . . .

"Tuesday, 14th. Messrs. Catlin and Bogart arrived from Ft. Union on their way to St. Louis.

"Wednesday, 15th. A fine pleasant day. Baptiste Dorion and G. P. Cerre arrived from the Brulé camps, with dry meat, robes, etc.

"Thursday, 16th. Light southerly winds. Mr. Catlin left us for St. Louis, accompanied by Mr. Bogart, in a skiff.

"Friday, 17th. A fine, pleasant day, with a refreshing shower in the evening. In the early part of the day news was brought in of a band of buffalo not being far from the fort. Consequently a party went out to hunt them. Baptiste Dorion was one of the party; they all returned without killing any buffalo; but Dorion fell in with a Stiaago [?] Indian riding off with one of the Company horses. After a little scuffle he killed the Indian and we got back the horse. We suppose he was a Ree. Dorion did not fire at the Indian till he had fired two arrows at him.

"Saturday, 18th. Hot, sultry weather. Hands employed variously. Finished hay-making and have five mud chimneys under way. Brown arrived from the lumber yards, also two rafts of timber. . . .

"Tuesday, 21st. Weather as yesterday. At 11 A. M. Mr. Brown arrived from the lumber yards. Two of the men there, Louis Turcot and James Durant, having stolen a canoe and deserted last evening. Mr. Brown, with one man, left here in a canoe at 12 M. in pursuit of them. Several lodges, Yanctons and Esontis [?] arrived on the other side the Missouri and camped there.

"Thursday, 23rd. Fine weather. Mr. Brown arrived with the two deserters, Turcot and Durant. He caught them in the middle of the Big Bend.

"Friday, 24th. A continuation of fine, pleasant weather. Twelve or thirteen lodges Indians crossed the river and camped alongside of us. Commenced planting the pickets of the fort. . . .

"Sunday, Sept. 9th. Southerly winds and pleasant weather. The prairies are on fire in every direction. G. P. Cerre arrived from the Sawon Camp. . . .

"Monday, 24th. Laidlaw, Halsey, Campbell, Demaney, and an Indian left for Sioux agency, near Fort Lookout, and on

"Sunday, the 30th, they returned, accompanied by Dr. Martin, who visits this place for the purpose of vaccinating the Indians. Messrs. McKenzie and Fontenelle, with several others, arrived from Ft. Union in a bateau, having on board about 6,000 lbs. beaver skins. In the evening Wm. Dickson arrived from River Bois Blanc in quest of Mdse. for the trade there."

H.

JOURNAL OF A STEAMBOAT VOYAGE FROM ST. LOUIS TO FORT UNION.

The journal which follows, like that which has just been given, affords a better idea of one of the peculiar features of fur trade life than can be had in any other way. The navigation of the Missouri river was a science *sui generis*. The reader will note especially the hourly presence of serious obstacles, such as sand bars and snags; the great annoyance from winds and storms; and the overshadowing importance of the wood question. He will also note how few of the old river names still survive, and how many "forts" or trading houses were then in existence whose very names are now utterly forgotten.

The following statistics show the rate of speed made by the vessels whose annual voyages are recorded in the Sire Journal. The distance from St. Louis to Fort Union was about 1,760 miles:

In 1841 the trip up consumed 80 days and the trip down 21 days.
In 1842 the trip up consumed 76 days and the trip down 22 days.
In 1843 the trip up consumed 49 days and the trip down 15 days.
In 1844 the trip up consumed 54 days and the trip down 16 days.
In 1845 the trip up consumed 42 days and the trip down 15 days.
In 1846 the trip up consumed 44 days and the trip down 31 days.
In 1847 the trip up consumed 40 days and the trip down 14 days.

The trip of 1847 was the shortest both ways of those here given. The average daily speed up was 44 miles: down. 123 miles.

LOG OF STEAMBOAT OMEGA, from St. Louis to Fort Union, 1843.

JOSEPH A. SIRE, Master.
JOSEPH LA BARGE, Pilot.

Among the passengers were the Naturalist Audubon and party.

(Translated from the original French.)

April 25. Tuesday. Left St. Louis at 11 A. M. Water high but falling slightly. Current strong. We make slow progress. Reach St. Charles at 4 o'clock next morning, when we put Sarpy on shore, who returns to St. Louis.

April 26. Wednesday. Set out at 6 A. M. Current still strong. Took wood twice. The steamboat *Rowena* passed us at the entrance to the channel along Bonhomme Island. Met the *Troja* at *Leve Cul*. Camped at South Point at 8:30 P. M. The river is undoubtedly in fine condition for night running; but it is dark and the weather threatening. Moreover, we have too much to lose to risk our cargo for the sake of gaining a little time.

April 27. Thursday. Set out rather late. At times our progress was very slow. It was 9 P. M. when we passed Portland. As the weather is clear we run all night. Passed the mouth of the Osage at day-break.

April 28. Friday. The current still strong and the river rising. Passed Jefferson City, where we met the *Mary Tompkins* and the *Weston* going to St. Louis. Wooded at 11 A. M., 9 miles above Jefferson City. Much difficulty in finding wood. We found some by chance, 4½ cords, below the large island 4 miles below Rocheport. We tried in vain to stem the current along the bluffs *(de monter les côtes)*. At 10 P. M. I decided to put to shore on a little island in order not to consume our wood to no purpose. We had the good fortune to find some poles *(perches)* and I had 300 brought on board.

April 29. Saturday. Set out as soon as it was light, which enabled us to take some advantage of the current. We succeeded in ascending. Wood still scarce and poor. Stopped at Boonville to take on Booker, a mulatto. Passed Glasgow at 7 o'clock. Great difficulty in doubling the point opposite the mouth of the Chariton. Camped on the island below Old Jefferson at 9:15 P. M. I send the yawl to look for some poles.

April 30. Sunday. Set out at 4 A. M. Current still strong, and to cap the climax the wind rises with incredible force. It is useless to try to keep on. and we put to shore 4 miles from our last camp, where, most fortunately, we find poles and dry mulberry, which permits us to fill the boat. At 1 P. M. the wind seems to moderate. We set out, and thanks to the wood which we had chopped and the poles we had taken, we get along very well. As the night is fine we continue our voyage, and at break of day are at the "*Coupé du Petits O.*" Took 5 cords of wood at Fine's. Passed Lexington at the dinner hour, where we were overtaken by the *John Auld*, which pushed along by.

May 1. Monday. Current still strong. Overtook the *John Auld* at camp, where we took 6 cords of wood and then lay to for the night at the head of the chute.

May 2. Tuesday. Set out before day. It seems that we are making better progress. In fact, since the water is falling the current is less strong. Stop at Owen's, where I take 12 barrels flour for Richardson. Stopped at Liberty Landing for dispatches from Mr. Laidlaw, and at Madame Chouteau's, where I find everything abandoned. Passed the bad place at the mouth of the Kansas river after sunset. The weather was so fine that I decided to run all night. At 6 A. M. we reached Leavenworth.

May 3. Wednesday. Set out at 8 A. M. We got along well, although often slowly. At 4 P. M. we reached the little island below village 24. In order to avoid a bad chute on the right we took the left hand channel and had the misfortune to run aground. We got ourselves clear once, but had the misfortune to get fast crosswise the channel. It rained and blew in a frightful manner. We were compelled to stay where we were for the night in the hope of extricating ourselves in the morning.

May 4. Monday. We get clear, but by a false maneuver of the pilot we get aground again. Broke our large cable. Finally succeeded in getting off by shoving the stern around. The wind blows with incredible force, and we have to pass a place very dangerous on account of snags. We remain at the bank until 6 P. M., and finally camp at the wood yard above village 24.

May 5. Friday. Set out at day-break. Took 9 cords of wood 400 yards farther on. The strong wind annoys us much. Arrived at Robidoux [Blacksnake Hills or St. Joseph] at 1 P. M. and remained there an hour taking 5 cords of wood, 10 barrels lard, and some provisions. The wind increases. We enter the Nadowa chute. We have hard work to overcome the wind at Nadowa Island, and it is with difficulty that we arrive opposite our last year's encampment at 8 P. M.

May 6. Friday. The wind blows frightfully all night, with such violence that it seems as though the smoke-stacks would be blown down. It moderates a little at sun rise and we set out. We do not go far before it blows as strong as it did before. We land to cut some axe helves and get a little wood. It is one o'clock when we resume our journey, and in spite of wind and current we arrive at the Iowas at sunset, where I discharge the freight for the agent. We go on to Jeffrey's Point, where I take 10 cords of wood for which I give an order upon the House for $20.

May 7. Sunday. We set out at day-break. Good wood, calm weather, and good progress. Passed the Grand Nemaha (Tapon Glaire) and stopped at Brown's at Nishnabotana, where I take 5 cords of wood that I do not pay for. (I forgot to say that we chopped some wood at the point above Tapon Glaire.) Passed the Little Nemaha, where we were obliged *de muler pour prendre à droite*. We lost fully an hour. Finally we camped at a point on the left in view of Long Island.

May 8. Monday. We made good progress as far as to Beau Soleil Island, where we tried in vain to pass to the right along the prairie. It was necessary to take the old channel. Took 8½ cords of wood at Hank Roberts. We found everything carried off by the water at Akays (?). Passed to the left *de l'Isle de l'Etroit;* passed the *Grand déboulis.* A little farther all the houses are demolished by the flood. Passed Table river. Stopped at McPherson's, where we bought and cut some wood, and finally went into camp opposite the mouth of the Weeping Water.

May 9. Tuesday. Passed Trudeau Island, Five Barrels Island, la Purré à Calumet, L Oeil de fer. I find no wood. I decide to have some cut a little further on. Tried the left hand channel, where the steamboat *Pirate* was lost, but could not get through. Tried the right hand, but it was shallow, *bouleversé* and full of sand bars. Found 5 cords of wood at Baptiste Le Clair's, which we took. Crossed to Abbadie's, where we put off his freight. Went on to *L'Issue,* where I put off freight for the sutler and for Captain Burgwin. Set out at 7 P. M. and camped above the bad sand bar near the marsh at Hart's cut-off at 9 P. M.

May 10. Wednesday. We progressed finely as far as Hart's Bluffs (côtes à Hart), where, at 7 A. M., we were summoned by an officer and four dragoons to land. I received a polite note from Captain Burgwin, informing me that his duty obliged him to make an inspection of the boat. We put ourselves to work immediately, while Mr. Audubon goes to call upon the Captain. They return in about two hours. I compel, as it were (en quelque sort), the officer to make the strictest possible inspection, but on the condition that he would do the same with the other traders. I have the men chop 15 cords of *liard vert* for the return trip. Heaven knows if it will be there when I get back. Resumed our journey at noon. Passed the house of Mr. Cabanne, Boyer river, Fort Manuel, and stopped for the night at the head of

Four-house Cut-off in the hope of finding wood there. I was cruelly disappointed. There is nothing but some elms there, which will be very difficult to split. I dread to use drift wood, but we shall have to come to it and will use rosin to make it burn.

May 11. Thursday. We soon find some drift wood, which we proceed to cut, since there is no other kind in this country. As I expected, it will burn only by the aid of rosin. Passed Soldier river. Proceeded slowly on account of the wood. Cut some more wood, which was worse than the other. It is almost impossible to keep going. We camp at 8:30 P. M. Tomorrow I hope to find some ash at Little Sioux river. The water rose 5 feet last night.

May 12. Friday. Scarcely had we started when we were obliged to lay to on account of the fog. Started again half an hour later. Found the difficult chute of the Little River of the Sioux stopped up, and the channel passing through the mud bars. Stopped at the end of the long straight stretch and chopped some ash. It is a good place for this kind of wood. Passed Pratt cut-off, Wood's bluffs, and camped at Blackbird. The water rose last night 2½ feet.

May 13. Saturday. Just as we were on the point of starting a fog arose, which compelled us to remain in camp until 6:30 A. M. During this time I had some ash cut. Came on in good shape. Passed McClellan's Bluffs, where a cut-off has formed on the opposite side, which saves two or three miles. Chopped some *liard sec* below the prairie, where the Omaha village stands. Passed this prairie. Chopped some more wood about 3 miles below Sergeant's Bluffs. There is enough here for several years. Passed Setting Sun Bluffs. Camped at the mouth of the Big Sioux. It is wretched weather, rainy and windy. Last night the river stopped rising.

May 14. Sunday. We depart before day break by moonlight. The weather is uncertain all the morning. At 11:30 A. M. we stopped at the point where we arrested 4 deserters two years ago, and loaded the boat with dry wood. We push on at 1:30 P. M., but the wind, which had risen with incredible force, and the strength of the current (for the water commenced to rise again last night) made us give it up. I had the boat put to shore and set the men to cutting wood for the return trip. Instead of subsiding the wind increases. It is rather a hurricane. I am momentarily in fear that the smoke stacks will fall down. If this wind continues it will be a sleepless night *(nuit blanche)* for me.

May 15. Monday. The wind continues to blow as hard as yesterday. I set the men to cutting *bois de liard* again. At about 3 P. M. the wind seems to soften. In case it continues [to fall?] I will have the boilers pumped up so that we may be ready if it falls enough. We set out, but Great Heaven, how slow we go! Often we drift backward by the force of the current. We come as far as to the foot of the bluffs of Little Iowa river. Last night the river rose 14 inches, and I think that it is still rising. The *Omega* does all she can, but she is too heavily loaded to continue against a strong current like this, and the wind of this country, which is almost always strong.

May 16. Tuesday. The river rose 11 inches last night, and consequently we have a h—l of a current *(un courant d'enfers)*. It is 11:30 A. M. when we reach the Vermillion houses. We set out again at 12:30, after having taken on some wood which I left there last year; but scarcely had we doubled the point of the island when the engineer announced the sad news that one of our boilers had burned out. We have to tie up, and I much fear that we shall be here a part of tomorrow. I set the men to cutting green *liard*. which will be of use, if not for the return trip, then for next year.

May 17. Wednesday. We remain here longer than I thought we should, for at the hour of this writing we have not finished [the repairs]. I have more wood cut and we have 50 to 60 cords. The water, which had risen last night, has commenced falling since dinner. May it so continue until we reach Fort Pierre.

May 18. Thursday. It takes us another day to complete our repairs. This is due to the difficulty of introducing rivets between the flues and the wall of the boiler. The water continues to fall rapidly — 3 feet since yesterday noon. Messrs. Laidlaw and Drips passed down at 8 o'clock with 4 Mackinaw boats. I write to the house and Mr. Audubon sends his dispatches.

May 19. Friday. We push on at day break. We find the current still strong in spite of the fall of water. Lost considerable time in passing the mouth of the Vermillion. It is necessary to sound, and we find only 4½ feet. Cut 8 or 10 cords of wood at the first point on the left above the Vermillion. We find the channel which follows the bluffs below the *Petit Arc* extremely bad (there is considerable ash at this place). We cut some more dry *liard* at the beginning of the point below the *Perkins' woods.* We went into camp at the said woods.

May 20. Saturday. The water fell only 2½ inches last night. We set out at break of day in spite of wind and rain, which hinder us a great deal. We arrive at noon at the ash point on the right going up, below Bonhomme Island. It is useless to try to chop any: the water has flooded everything. I am seriously embarrassed; when opposite the entrance to the Bonhomme channel we find enough dry *liard* to fill the boat. It is half past three. All day long the wind blows as it only can on the upper Missouri. Often we scarcely move at all. We pass to the left of the island. The water is shallow and swift. Finally we come to the first prairie to the right, where there is a good quantity of drift. Camped at 8:30.

May 21. Sunday. Set out at 3:15 A. M. The wind blew all night and is blowing still. We still see a good deal of drift wood, but we are not in need of any. Passed Manuel river and Bazille river. A little below we saw a band of cows [buffalo], something that has not been seen here for many years. At 10 A. M. we arrive at Fort Mitchell, where we cut dry wood from the pickets, houses and fences. If the Indians or others do not burn this establishment, there will be enough dry wood there for two or three years. Resumed our voyage at 11 A. M., but the wind, which increases, retards us considerably. Passed Chouteau river. There the wind becomes almost irresistible. Nevertheless we enter the channel of Ponca Island, but at the head of the island, where the bluffs rise directly from the water *(trempent à l'eau)*, we are forced to stop. I land on the island and go to cutting green wood, which will be of use on the return trip or next year. It is 3 P. M. Finally, toward 6 o'clock, the wind seems to moderate. We set out and follow those interminable bluffs, which *trempent à l'eau*, and go into camp on the opposite shore at the commencement of the prairie at 8:30 P. M. Last night the water fell only an inch and a half.

May 22. Monday. We push out at 3 A. M. Passed the town at 4:30. All along the bluffs (côtes), where it is shallow, we move slowly. Cut more wood at 6 A. M., some miles below Handy's. It is necessary to take wood wherever one can find it. In passing Handy's point a party of savages fired a volley at us, two shots of which passed through the men's cabin. Fortunately no one was hit. It is probably those rascally Santees; no one else would be capable of such an attack. We had much difficulty in passing the point of oaks opposite the river Pratte. We had to sound, and found only 4 feet large. During this time I had some oak wood cut, poor fuel for steam. Finally we lay to at 8 P. M. at Little Cedar Island. It will be necessary to chop some wood in the morning, notwithstanding that we have commenced this evening.

May 23. Tuesday. After cutting some wood we set out at 5:30 A. M. Cedar Island is no longer worth the trouble of stopping there, since it is impracticable to land where the best wood is. Took the same route as last year; passed to the right of Snag Island *(Isle aux Chicots)*. Took on board the hunters whom I sent out last night. Passed the Three Islands safely, but opposite the Bijoux

Hills at Désiré Island I plunge into the sand bars and soon we are aground athwart the current. Our spars break and it is dark before Durack returns with others. We will begin again tomorrow morning. The heat has been unsupportable all day. Thermometer 92°.

May 24. Wednesday. We find the boat in the morning pretty much in the same situation. We set at work immediately and are just about to get afloat again when one of the spars breaks, and we are obliged to send 2 miles to look for another on an island where they are very scarce. It is 10 A. M. and the yawl has not yet returned. We met La Charité, who is descending the river in a skin canoe with goods for the Poncas and brings me a letter from Mr. Honoré Picotte. The yawl returns at last and we succeed in extricating ourselves, but we go aground again, again get off, and after having sounded again find only one passage and that a doubtful one. We lurch and break one of our rudders, but 10 minutes afterward we are afloat. We put to shore to mend the rudder, and meanwhile I have some wood cut from drift. At 6 P. M. we resume our journey and come to the head of the Bijoux Hills before night, where I send out men to chop a little wood. The river continues to fall slowly. The wind has changed to the N. W., and it has turned cold.

May 25. Thursday. We did not get off until 6 A. M. because I had a full load of dry wood taken on. The wind rises with rain and the weather is frightful. We are obliged to stop and sound before we reach John's Bluffs. We run with difficulty on 4 feet of water. The river has fallen considerably and in many places we find no more water than we have to have. Passed White river. At American river *(Rivière des Americans)* we spend a good deal of time in sounding. At the head of the channel at Cedar Island we find no way out. Nevertheless, Désiré, whom I send to sound, reports 4.4 feet. We shall try it tomorrow morning.

May 26. Friday. We are a little late in starting, for it is very necessary to see clearly before leaving the channel.

Sent out the yawl. Found the same depth again, 4ft. 4 inches. Passed through. Stopped at the foot of the bluffs below Fort Lookout, where we cut more cedar, which we have to go a good way for. We had much trouble at two places in passing Fort Lookout point. We passed to the right of Deslaurier's Island for the first time. I believe that the [good] water was that way last year, but it did not suit Francis [pilot] to try it, and I was compelled to lighten the boat of her whole cargo. At the head of the chute we had to sound, and found just enough water to pass. If we drew 4 inches more we should frequently have had to lighten half the cargo. Much trouble in passing along the bluffs below the Great Bend. Put ashore Mr. Audubon, his companions, and 3 men, who will camp on the other side of the Bend and wait for us there. Chopped more drift wood and camped at 8:15 at the first bluffs on the right going up. I forgot to say that I have sent 3 men express to Fort Pierre with papers for that establishment.

May 27. Saturday. Scarcely have we set out when we consumed two hours making a crossing. A little farther it looks for a moment as if we should be obliged to lighten the cargo a half (it was raining in torrents), but we have the good luck to get through. Passed the chain of rocks at dinner time, and at 3 P. M. arrived at the head of the Great Bend, where I have some wood cut, and Mr. Audubon and companions return on board. We try in vain to pass to the right of the island below the mouth of Medicine river. We have to return and take the small channel to the left. There is a good deal of good cedar wood at the entrance and if the channel remains there it will be a good place to get wood. Camped near the head of the channel at 8:30 P. M.

May 28. Sunday. As far as to the mouth of the Medicine river there is good wood. We have much difficulty to the point where we broke our rudder last year. We get along very well after that. I do not cut any wood at the bluffs below the Grand Cedar Island, because I expect to find some where I cut some last year opposite La Chapelle

Island. But a large sand bar has formed there. I am compelled to stop in sight of Simeneau Island at 1:30 P. M. to cut some poor wood. Resumed our voyage at 2:15. We got along well to Ebbitt's house, where I take on 30 packs of robes and Major Hamilton. At the head of Simeneau Island there is not enough water, only 3 feet large. To take off half the cargo will not be enough. I therefore decide to await until tomorrow morning. Perhaps some changes will take place.

May 29. Monday. I send out to sound the channel. No more water than yesterday, but appearances are more favorable. Where there was no water yesterday we find 3 feet 6 inches. The gentlemen from Fort George pay us a visit and take dinner with us.

May 30. Tuesday. In one place we find 4 feet. In the other 3 feet 10 inches. We set to work and it is 5 P. M. before we have passed those two cursed bars. We were obliged to send the yawl for wood. Messrs. Picotte, Chardon, and several others arrive from the fort [Pierre]. Camped at 8 P. M. opposite Fleury Island, where we loaded up with dry wood. Fleury, who came on board, tells me that the river has risen 7 inches since noon.

May 31. Wednesday. It seems that we may not be able to reach the fort [Pierre], for we shall not be able to pass along the small island below the fort. We resolve to try the small channel to the left, but after a long trial we are convinced that it is impossible. I send to the fort for the ferry boat and a Mackinaw boat, and having transferred some lead and tobacco we are able to pass up the right of the island. We reach the fort at 3 P. M. The unloading of the freight for this post is finished at sundown.

June 1. Thursday. I remain at the fort a part of the forenoon on account of business. Write to the House and to Durack with my instructions concerning the *Trapper*. Crossed at 11 A. M. Took on some articles I had need of. Gave some provisions to Durack for his journey. Cut 2 cords of drift wood and stopped for the night above old

Fort George at 9:30 P. M. (There is a good deal of drift wood at the old dirt village.)

June 2. Friday. We set out at 3 A. M. Passed the Big Cheyenne, the island at Ash point, to the left of Assiniboine Island, where we could not land and consequently could not take on the wood which I left there last year. Stopped five times to take on drift wood. Passed to the left of Little Cheyenne Island and camped about 2 miles below the Little Cheyenne at 8:45 P. M.

June 3. Saturday. The wind blows violently all night and has not stopped when we set out. We try to pass to the left of Touchon Kaksah, but are obliged to go back about 2 miles and take the right hand channel, and we pass to the head of a small willow island. We come along very well, although there are some bad places. It is not surprising for we are today in the worst part of the Missouri. Stopped at the willow island below the mouth of the Moreau at 10 A. M. and took on some very poor drift wood, but there is no other. We try the right hand of Prele Island, where we went down last year, but we find no way out. We go back and take the left hand channel, where we lost 2 days last year, and find good water. Passed Grand river, where I thought I could land and cut up an old house for wood, but we could not get in there. Passed the rampart and landed opposite the little island below the old Aricara village. The weather is threatening, and I believe a bad storm is on. I have scarcely a cord of wood for the start tomorrow morning, but I hope I have enough to reach the ash point below the old village. It is 8:30 P. M.

June 4. Sunday. We get a late start on account of our bad wood. Stopped a little farther on at Ash point below the old Aricara village. Stopped again at La Chapelle Point where we take in the remains of the Primeau houses. Passed *La Bourbeuse,* Fort Manuel, and camped at Primeau's fort a little below Beaver river, where we load up with cord wood, leaving some for the return trip. I note that this side of the *Bourbeuse,* and even below there is a good deal of drift wood. All day we have had a north wind which has delayed us a good deal. But for that we should have made a much better day.

June 5. Monday. We have just enough water at the second Beaver river crossing. Passed Cannon Ball river, Mitchell's wintering house, Bouis' wintering house, where we fill the boat with worthless wood, which makes me curse all the rest of the day. It is only by the aid of rosin that we can raise barely enough steam to keep us moving very slowly. I have left several cords of the same wood for the down trip. Passed Apple river, the place where the *Assiniboine* burned, and finally went into camp at 9:20 P. M., at the beginning of Heart River Point. We have passed today a good deal of drift wood between and considerably below Bouis' wintering ground. If the water does not carry it off between now and next year it will be very easy to get. The water seems to be rising rapidly all day. It rose two inches last night.

I forgot to say that we were not able to land opposite the mouth of the *Rivière au Berchet,* where I had chopped some oak wood last year. It is necessary therefore to go there again, although the report is that the Indians have burned a part of it.

June 6. Tuesday. We set out at day break. We lose a good deal of time in finding the channel a little above the mouth of Heart river. It is 9 A. M. when we get clear. We meet Kipp with four barges at the Square Buttes. He joins us. I write to St. Louis by the barges, care Mr. Burguiere. Passed the Square Buttes, where we cut some ash wood. Camp at the point where the Assiniboines met us two years ago. Filled the boat with poor ash wood, which Mr. Chardon had cut for us. All day the weather has been miserable, rain and an east wind.

July 7. Wednesday. Bad weather continues all night. We reach Fort Clark early. We are much delayed in getting the freight ashore, for it rains continually. The wind rises with such force that I decide to remain here all day.

Give a feast to the Aricaras and get everything ready to start at daybreak tomorrow.

June 8. Thursday. We are off at 2:45 A. M. We pass safely the Grosventre bar because the water is up; otherwise I think we should have had a hard time of it there. Stopped with these Indians and lose an hour in being polite to them. Passed the Great Rock. Passed the wintering ground of the Aricaras last year, which is situated a little below Dancing Bear, where there are three wagons which I must take to Fort Clark on my way down. At the same time we can cut some wood from the lodges and houses. Camped a little above the wintering ground at 8 P. M. I have the boat loaded with ash and dry *liard*. Three times today we have cut *bois de bature*. The river continues to rise. It is high enough for a good down trip.

June 9. Friday. We set out again at the same hour. Passed Dancing Bear an hour later. This point has *deboulée* a good deal and it will be of use to cut wood there for the down trip. Passed without difficulty the place which used to be so bad. The channel has improved greatly. Passed the mouth of the Little Missouri and all the bad places below and above the river without difficulty. Stopped at the prairie a little below the foot of the Great Bend to pack our cylinder. During this time we kill a cow. We pass to the left of the little island. In passing the chute our yawl is considerably damaged. We land for a moment to put it on deck and during this time I have some *bois de bature* cut. We get ourselves entangled in a channel *tout le long de terre,* which has no outlet. We have to back out and follow the island. We do not go far along the bluffs *qui trempent à l'eau,* when we run into the same difficulty and have to withdraw. We lie to finally at 10:30 P. M. at the place where we cut wood every year. I will have the boat loaded tomorrow morning.

June 10. Saturday. We cut wood until 4:30 A. M. Stopped a moment and killed two bulls. Passed the Little Knife river at 12 o'clock. A little farther we cut some dry *liard*. Passed the chain all right. Met four lodges of Assiniboines at the beginning of White River Point. Again we cut a good lot of dry *liard*, little more than we cut last year, at the upper end of the point. Met the same Indians again at 7 P. M. Camped near the Butte au Curé at 8:45 P. M. Strong wind and rain.

June 11. Sunday. We start a little late on account of bad weather. Cut some ash wood at 9:30. Continued our journey at 11 o'clock. It blows strong all day and at times we scarcely move. Do our best we cannot reach the Muddy. We camp at 9 P. M. at the foot of the bluffs below that river. The water has fallen a little since day before yesterday.

June 12. Monday. The water fell last night about three inches. We set out at 3:15 A. M. and soon pass the Muddy. Stopped to cut a little dry wood. We have no more. Stopped again at 11 A. M. at the place where we usually cut wood. We fill the boat with dry *liard*. I am indeed afraid that we shall not reach [the fort] this evening. Wind strong and frequent rain. Finally we start at 12:45. We make but slow progress on account of wind and current. Passed Fort Mortimer opposite the mouth of the Yellowstone, and reached Fort Union at sunset. The water continues to fall.

June 13. Tuesday. We discharged the freight for the fort in a short time, made some repairs, and spent the rest of the day at the fort. The water is still falling, but not fast.

June 14. Wednesday. It was after breakfast when we set out [on the return trip]. Stopped a little way down and took on enough wood, if we do not run aground, to carry us to Fort Clark. It is 9:30 A. M. when we pass the mouth of the Yellowstone. Made good progress the rest of the day. Stopped for the night at 8:15 a little below the mouth of Knife river. The water continued to fall last night.

June 15. Thursday. As I anticipated we had a good deal of trouble at the head of the island at Little Knife river. Run aground, worked a long while, and did not get off till noon. We ran the Great Bend without difficulty until we reached the island at the foot, where we ran hard aground again and did not get off until sunset. Camped eight or ten miles farther down. Tomorrow will be another bad day. I forgot to say that at midnight there came on board a band of Assiniboines who, in my inmost soul, I would like to send to the devil. I had to pass the rest of the night with them, and to take ten of them along with us as far as to the Grosventres.

June 16. Friday. Contrary to my expectations we did not ground at the mouth of the Little Missouri. Stopped opposite Dancing Bear, where I took on several wagons for Fort Clark and also some good dry wood from Chardon's houses. Farther down we stopped at an old village where there was some more good wood. A little farther down we had to cast anchor because of a break of a valve stem. We came slowly to the bank and resume our voyage at 5 P. M. Put off the Assiniboines at the Grosventres. We soon came to the bad sand bar. We looked for a channel a long while without finding a sure one. It being already late and a prospect of bad weather, I put to shore a little below the mouth of Knife river. Tomorrow morning we must sound. River stationary last night.

June 17. Saturday. We sound the channel—scarcely enough water, but by aid of the spars we force ourselves over the bar. We are soon at the Mandans, where I take on board 500 odd packs. Set out at 2:30, make good progress. Took the rest of the wood that Chardon had had cut; passed Heart river after sunset; struck the bar but had the good luck to back off. Camped at the same place where we camped on our way up on the 5th. River stationary.

June 18. Sunday. Started a little late. Passed Cannon Ball river. Killed a cow and a bull. Wooded at Beaver river. I left four cords which were too far to go after, and we have enough anyway, and the heat is insupportable.

In backing up we scuttled our yawl. Ran aground at the same place, but got off soon. Put to the bank a moment. After that we got along all right. Camped a little above Prêle Island, where we remained two days last year waiting for the channel to cut out. The river is still stationary.

June 19. Monday. This has been a day of running aground and of fatigue, but we expected it. We find all the channels changed. Passed the Moreau and ran aground a little below. Aground again opposite Touchon Kaksa. Stopped at the bluffs opposite the Little Cheyenne, where we cut a little cedar, but set out again three-quarters of an hour later. Stopped at Assiniboine Island at 6:30 P. M., where I have the yawl fetch the wood which I left there last year. The heat is extremely oppressive today. The water does not fall any yet. As I am writing a hurricane rises accompanied with thunder and rain, lasting much of the night. It already commences to turn cold.

June 20. Tuesday. It is still blowing too hard this morning to set out, but at 5 A. M. the wind seems to fall a little. I have the fire lighted. As nearly as I can judge by the water marks the river has risen four inches. Passed the island at Ash point, where there is a bad place. We soon reach the Big Cheyenne. We have much trouble at the crossing and more at the place where we generally cut cedar. The weather is so bad that I stop and go to cutting wood. I send and have the channel sounded, which takes a long while on account of the wind. Finally we get by. Stopped at 7 P. M. a little above the dirt village, where we gathered all the drift wood we could find. Finished work at 8:30. All day we have had wind and rain. The river still seems to be rising.

June 21. Wednesday. We soon reach the fort [Pierre]. I learn with pleasure that the *Trapper* left nine days ago. The water rose last night and is still rising. I therefore wait all day at the fort. It is frightful weather all day.

June 22. Thursday. Set out a little late. Arrived at the farm, where we take on wood which is all soaked. It is not surprising, for it has rained and blown ever since we left Fort Clark. Resumed our voyage at 8 o'clock. A little trouble below the farm and a little above Lachappelle Island (always a bad place) passed Frederick with six barges and camped at foot of the bluffs below White river. The wind is still high. The river stopped rising last night.

June 23. Friday. A little late in starting again. But that is on account of the gloomy weather which we have had for some time. Today it has turned out pleasant. Made good progress all day. We take more of the cut wood on Ponca Island. It is too far to carry it. We stop below Manuel river, where we cut up some good drift wood. There is a good deal of it from the head of Bonhomme Island to Manuel river, and it will be a good resource for next year. Camped at the point above Vermillion. I would much have preferred to have reached the place where we cut some wood on the way up, but it is too late and here we are in the land of snags. The river rose an inch last night.

June 24. Saturday. We reach a wood pile in a little while. Wooded quickly. Stopped at the Vermillion houses where the channel is so full of snags that we cannot get to the bank. I land with the yawl. As Paschal has not the means of sending the packs to me—all his horses having been stolen and one man killed by those brigand Santes, probably the same who fired on us on our way up—I bring four packs in the yawl and at 10 A. M. we set out. I do not stop where we have some wood cut below Little Iowa river, because we have enough to take us to Hart's bluffs. We came along finely and camped at Little Sioux river where the mosquitoes eat us up. The weather threatens wind and rain.

June 25. Sunday. We came along very well. Stopped at the cut-off at Hart's bluffs, where we take on the rest of the wood that we cut on our way up. Stopped at Hardin's and at Sarpy's, where we met the *Oceana*. We remained some time and put off 11 barrels of lard and two of biscuit. Took some wood from opposite Baptiste Leclair's. Stop again at Arcot's, where we take three cords that I do not pay for. We came along very well until in sight of the narrows, when our packing blows out. We can scarcely reach the bank, being in a place full of snags. It is dark when we stop.

June 26. Monday. We have a good deal of trouble in extricating ourselves from the obstructions in which our wheels are buried. It is necessary to repair the arms. The sun is already high when we set out. Stopped at Brown's and took five cords of wood which I do not pay for. Stopped at Robidoux, where I take on six cords more, which I do not pay for *non plus à* $1.50. Finally we camped at Leavenworth. Met the steamboat *Admiral* at Weston.

June 27. Tuesday. Set out as usual. Stopped at Madame Chouteau's. Took wood at Sharp's; also at the chute of Mammy's wood yard. Camp at Old Jefferson, where we take three cords of wood to fill the boat.

June 28. Wednesday. In spite of wind and rain we make good progress. Took five cords at Bear river. Continued our journey and camped at night opposite St. Charles where we took four cords of wood at Chauvain's.

June 29. Thursday. Reached St. Louis in time for breakfast.

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